WESTERN MONEY

AND THE

CHINESE CHURCH

An Attempt to Find a Modern Approach to an Old Practice

By

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Why This Pamphlet?

DURING an experience of twenty-seven years as a missionary in China I have listened to many—often heated!—discussions of the place of western money in the life and work of the Chinese Church. During that time Chinese Christians have made much progress in economic self-help. But it is generally admitted that, in spite of this progress and the great amount of effort put into securing it, complete financial self-reliance of the Chinese Church will, for many of its branches and institutions, be indefinitely postponed. As a result of this fact and various psychological changes in the mind of Chinese Christians the economic relationship of western and Chinese churches is still a vital subject of discussion. Many of those participating in these discussions have held and still hold that financial self-reliance is a necessary *preliminary* condition of the spiritual vitality of the Chinese Church. No inconsiderable proportion of those discussing the problem hold this condition up as the *purchase price* of Chinese Church autonomy. Chinese churches are, for instance, sometimes—not generally—told that they cannot exercise the privilege of calling their own pastor or evangelist until they are able to pay for him, in part at least.

I find that I have gradually developed a doubt that this way of approaching the problem will achieve any satisfactory solution thereto. Furthermore I have come seriously to question whether making financial self-reliance the *preliminary* condition of the spiritual vitality of a church or institution does not put financial self-help, which may or may not mean *complete* financial self-reliance, in the wrong relation to spiritual autonomy. In other words, is not financial self-help as much, if not more, a fruit of spiritual autonomy than a preliminary stimulant thereto? The insistent though somewhat overlooked problem is, How may western and Chinese Christians share their economic resources so that the spiritual autonomy and vitality of both will be safeguarded and increased thereby? In any event this aspect of the problem needs much more attention than it has yet received. If it is, as I am inclined to believe, the proper and principal approach to the development of the spiritual life of the Chinese Church it means that instead of missionaries *imposing* upon Chinese Christians all sorts of schemes to reduce the amount of western money shared with them they should first of all determine how the spiritual life of the Chinese Church can be so developed that it will naturally and spontaneously assume its share—not necessarily the whole—of the economic burden of Christian work in China.

Furthermore inasmuch as the rich, and rapidly growing richer, western churches can hardly cooperate with Chinese Christians without sharing their economic resources as well as their spiritual experience with them, it becomes urgently necessary that the development of the spiritual life of the Chinese Church be made the major consideration and viewed in relation to this *necessary sharing* of economic resources as a subordinate consideration.

At the present moment the Chinese Church and Christian institutions in China have, generally speaking, achieved autonomy. Is the achievement of this spiritual autonomy rather than *complete* financial self-reliance the major essential in the development of spiritual vitality which will in turn stimulate them to greater financial self-help? I think it is. This idea is the main thesis of this pamphlet. I have written it because I am profoundly convinced that while each and every church and Christian institution in China should help itself to the limit of its financial ability all Christian workers connected therewith urgently need to re-orient their thought on this difficult and baffling problem.

To have churches strong economically cooperating with churches in general weak economically is a modern problem that calls for a modern approach. In general the archives of Christianity do not contain any precedents that fit the situation. They must be worked out anew. To suggest this approach is the major purpose of this pamphlet.

Shanghai, China.
June 29, 1929.

Western Money and the Chinese Church

CHAPTER I.

TWO NECESSITIES

THE "self-support, self-control and self-propagation," of the Chinese Church have long been the guiding slogan of both missionaries and many Chinese Christian leaders. Judging by the frequency of their reference thereto, missionaries deem self-support the prime essential of a vigorous Chinese Church life; Chinese Christians, in contrast, have been more interested in self-control; while self-propagation has developed, to say the least, neither rapidly or adequately. Whether this latter has been due primarily to inadequate self-support, self-control only partially realized, or other reasons is not very clear. Some say one; others another.

Three facts do, however, stand out with regard to the future of the ideal embodied in the slogan. First, the Church and other Christian institutions are now practically under Chinese control: at least they are where that control is possible even though, for various reasons, it has not yet become effective everywhere in China. Second, Chinese Christians generally speaking, desire and need the continuance of the economic help of western Christians, and western Christians and missionaries are willing, on their part, to give this help in some as yet unsettled measure. This means that while the question of church-centric control of Christian work in China is in fair way of being realized, that of its *dual support* will indefinitely remain a feature of Christian policy in China.

To the above two facts must be added a third that has not received sufficient attention. It is this. Western Christians live on a comparatively high economic level; Chinese Christians live on a comparatively low one. Western Christians interested in Christian work in China face, therefore, the complicated question of how Christians economically strong can cooperate with those economically weak. How can, to put it another way, the purse-power of western Christians be *wisely* shared with China and the Chinese Church? The rising desire for and the assumption of self-direction in and by the Chinese Church creates a new situation for the old problem of its dual support.

Firmly rooted in the present situation are two urgent necessities, which in themselves are guide-posts to the road on which may be discovered the conditions for the future economic cooperation of Chinese and western churches.

The first necessity is that western Christians *must* continue to share their economic as well as their spiritual resources and experience with China in general and Chinese Christians in particular. Chinese Christian leaders, missionaries and boards in general admit this. It is, indeed, one of the *inevitable* aspects of the modern world-wide Christian mission.

One cannot visualize western Christians successfully offering their spiritual treasures to Chinese Christians and closing their purse to them. Western Christians must share their *purse* as well as their *faith* with China! They must cooperate economically as well as spiritually.

Arguments in support of this necessity are easily educed from the implications of the nature of the Christian life and the obligations of the Christian faith. In order to escape floundering in the slough of selfishness, western Christians must use *all* their resources in the service of Christ and their fellowmen. They must practise economic sacrifice as well as preach spiritual adventurousness. Both must go together in China.

For good or ill western Christians have won to a comparatively high level of economic strength and security. While many of them are poor, yet the purse power of their corporate church life is one of its spiritual dangers. In and through their Christian effort, this their *high* economic level has projected itself into China's *low* one. Thus has been created one of the major conflicts now agitating China and the Chinese Church. For inevitably this gives to Christian work in China an economic as well as a spiritual significance. Yet only by continuing to share all they have can western Christians hope to resolve this conflict. Economic parsimony, or what looks like it, does not fit in with or recommend spiritual generosity. Western Christians cannot, furthermore, successfully promote spiritual equality while living in economic superiority and hesitating to share their economic goods. Yet they often fervently urge that Chinese Christians cannot enjoy to the full these proferred spiritual treasures unless the Church in China depends on its own purse! Is that true?

The Chinese Church, with which western Christians desire to cooperate, confronts tremendous national needs: it is bent also under crushing needs of its own, which will probably for some time continue to be only vaguely defined. These needs are in themselves a challenge to the economic strength of western Christians. They cannot help meet China's spiritual needs and ignore these economic needs. The attempt to do so would simply short circuit the psychological wires of understanding and blow out the fuse of fellowship.

To promote their faith among the Chinese, western Christians must, therefore, share *all* they have. That they, the comparatively rich, are cooperating with the comparatively poor does, it is true, create great and complicated difficulties. But these difficulties do not relieve western Christians from the obligation to share: nor can they be used as excuses to that end. They belong to the urgency of the challenge of China's economic needs.

Such sharing, furthermore, is essential to the full and free expression of the Christian spirit. Christians are members of one great family.

Brothers in a family show and safeguard their brotherhood by sharing with each other. Western Christians must, therefore, continue to share their purse-power so as to magnify brotherhood, even if the new conditions in China demand a modification of the principles governing such sharing. That is another modern challenge of Christianity in China to Christians in the West.

The second necessity is that western economic cooperation with the Chinese Church *must* result in building up the spiritual vitality of that Church. That spiritual vitality is the major need of the Chinese Church, as of any church, is self-evident. It is in connection with this second necessity that we strike the chief difficulty in the situation. It is assumed by many, both Chinese Christian leaders and missionaries, that the Chinese Church must be economically self-reliant ere it can attain real spiritual vitality or autonomy. It has often been said that Chinese Christians cannot fittingly control Christian work in China until they do thus depend on their own purse. But it is equally self-evident that if economic self-reliance is a *sina qua non* of the spiritual vitality of the Chinese Church then western Christians, in pursuing a policy of economic cooperation which is deemed inimical thereto, are weakly drifting with an established practise that frustrates their chief purpose in sending missionaries and money to China. This *laissez faire* policy, whether held consciously or unconsciously, does not tend to build up the spiritual vitality of either the Chinese or the western Christian. As a matter of fact, the issue involved has to do with a *subordinate* value—the economic—which affects a major value—the spiritual life. It is as harmful to the spiritual life of western Christians for them to *withhold* their economic resources as to *deluge* unwisely the Chinese Church therewith is to the spiritual vitality of Chinese Christians. The problem is, therefore, one of the proper *use* of economic resources, not their elimination. This economic cooperation must be steered between the Scylla of withholding and the Charybdis of deluging. The *laissez faire* policy cannot serve as a chart for the delicate steering involved.

The assumption involved must be challenged. For if it is true, then two Christian necessities are frustrating each other. That simply bogs the Christian Movement in China in a self-defeating psychology. That is precisely where much of the discussion thereon finally lands. Many Chinese Christian leaders, on the one hand, are uncertain whether or not they ought to use western money; sometimes, they dub it a "curse": many western Christians are, on the other hand, uncertain whether or not they should give it. Both *talk* about the time when this economic cooperation will cease: both vaguely feel that they are doing something wrong; yet both keep on doing the thing they doubt. Such a psychology must be corrected.

If Chinese Christians must depend on their own purse ere they can be spiritually vital, then the arguments advanced from the nature of the Christian life for this economic sharing are really only arguments in the support of something which blights the spiritual life which both western and Chinese Christians desire to build up together. It is as though one party of bricklayers laid bricks during the day only to have them removed by another party during the night. In neither case can the building advance. Under such conditions, one of the good fruits of the western Christian spirit is turned into something that frustrates the growth of the same spirit in others. Christians are not justified in sharing their economic resources if the net result is the hindrance of the growth of spiritual vitality. And yet listening to many Christian leaders discuss this problem one can only conclude that they are conscious of doing this very thing.

Evidently we must dig deeper into this issue. We must find the sub-soil of spiritual relationships that will permit these two necessities to grow together not blight each other. We must either correct the wrong assumption involved or *cease* doing the wrong thing.

Naturally there is a wide diversity of opinion as to the relation of these two necessities. How shall the rich western brother share his wealth with his poor brother so as to build up the spiritual vitality of both? Can the Chinese Church develop a proper sense of responsibility, only if and when it *earns* what is used in its work? For the comparatively rich western Christian the difficulty is how to spend his money wisely. He dare not hoard it! For the usually poor Chinese Christian it is one of getting resources to meet tasks beyond his strength, unless he is to concentrate on simply building up a moderately comfortable church home and saving only his own soul! But there are many tasks more inclusive than this that the Chinese Church dare not shirk!

Perhaps it is only fair to raise here another question that must be faced. How far is the spiritual vitality of western Christians due to or affected by their economic security? How far is the lowered spiritual vitality of the Chinese Church and the Chinese due to their economic insecurity? These questions cannot be answered conclusively. Partial answers thereto will develop as we search for ways to work these two necessities together and make them serve rather than frustrate the Christian aim in China.

Few, if any, Christian workers in China assume that at the present time the economic resources of western Christians can be separated from the establishment of Christianity in China. If they cannot be taken out of the life of the Chinese Church the problem then is, How can they be wisely put into it? That is the problem that this pamphlet attempts to discuss.

CHAPTER II.

A CHANGING HABIT

Western Christian organizations working in China are divergent as regards their policy, theology and methods: but they converge economically in that they all share with China their economic resources. At the present moment western Christians are uncertain as to how their money should be spent in China: thoughtful Chinese Christians are, among other things, wondering how it can be fitted into and made to serve Chinese Christian autonomy. All kinds of contrasting theories and opinions are in evidence anent the major problem, How can the *Chinese Church* achieve spiritual vitality? That and that alone is the fundamental issue!

This problem has ousted one heretofore prominent, How can Christianity as known in the West be *transplanted* in China? The modern issue is that of a transplanted versus an indigenous spiritual movement. If the Chinese Church does not achieve a vital religious experience of its own then anything western churches have done or may yet do to help it is a failure.

Western Christians have thought much of the spending of their money in missionary effort as essential to their own spiritual vitalization. This is legitimate and true. They have, however, also inferred that the Chinese Church must follow in their economic footsteps if it would achieve a similar spiritual vitalization. This is certainly open to debate! Must or can Chinese Christians take the same attitude toward their own and western Christian economic resources that western Christians have taken? Is economic sacrifice the main test of spiritual vitality? Such questions must be faced.

During the last twenty-five years or so the western subsidization of Christian effort in China has been its most marked characteristic. The curve of subsidization has risen as rapidly, if not more so, than that of any other aspect of Christian work in China. This has correlated with the rapid shift of economic power in the West which has made the United States the chief economic power in the world and the leading contributor to Christian work in China. Reference to this shift in economic power is not intended to imply, however, that the problem of western Christian economic cooperation with the Chinese Church is one peculiar to American missionary interests. The problem is the same for all national Christian groups working in China no matter what the size of their contribution.

One fruit of this western Christian effort in China during the last generation has been the setting up of a *habit* of *subsidization*. This has not, of course, gone unchallenged. Some historical attempts to break or modify this habit will be taken up later and evaluated. But in spite of these challenging experiments the habit of subsidization became firmly set.

One aspect of this habit is seen in the fact that the Chinese Church has, to some extent, developed the psychology of dependence. One modern Chinese Christian problem is, therefore, adjustment of this psychology of dependence to their rising aspiration for self-direction. Many Chinese Christians often urge self-control without assuming full self-support as essential thereto. Their western Christian supporters have, in contrast, assumed that economic self-dependence is a *sina qua non* of self-control: sometimes the former is spoken of as the *purchase price* of the latter. Another and the missionary aspect of this habit is seen in the tendency to assume that those who give the economic resources must guide their use. Both aspects of this psychology are as a matter of fact showing signs of change. But can the two attitudes involved be merged into another and different one? Or must Chinese Christian spiritual autonomy wait indefinitely on their economic self-reliance? If the answer is in the affirmative then the tutelage of the Chinese Church must continue indefinitely. But that in view of the present urge to self-determination in China is impossible. If the answer is in the negative then new ways must be found for promoting spiritual autonomy. By "spiritual autonomy" I mean the self-direction of the spiritual life through direct personal responsibility to God, of which self-control or self-direction is an essential and effort at self-help, which often may and should mean full self-support, is a necessary fruit.

It is generally assumed that subsidization of Christian work in China must go on for an indefinite period. Yet many, as has been noted, also assume that the measure of economic dependence involved is an absolute hindrance to spiritual vitality. As to whether that assumption is sound or not the proof available forbids final decision. It still awaits and needs scientific study. Nevertheless it will, I think, become evident in later chapters that available facts give ground for doubt that either subsidization or economic self-reliance are necessarily the deciding factors in the spiritual development of an individual or a group.

Accepting for the moment the assumption that economic dependence does or may frustrate spiritual vitality it would appear that instead of weakly acquiescing in the habit as inevitable Christian leaders should make the spiritual vitality of the Chinese Church their first concern even if that means stopping subsidization. If subsidization does vitiate spirituality it ought to stop! That point is plain. For China needs and must have a *vital* Christianity no matter what the cost!

If, however, subsidization is inevitable then it must be so guided that spiritual vitality will be achieved in connection *therewith*. To claim, on the one hand, that subsidization of necessity vitiates spiritual life and then, on the other hand, admit that nothing can be done about it is indicative of spiritual weakness. If the habit is wrong it must be

changed: if it is not necessarily altogether wrong then it must be modified. A Christian Movement that must use its economic resources but cannot find out how to make them serve its main aim of building up spiritual vitality is to that extent *impotent*. Its use of *things* is frustrating the growth of its spirit. This tendency to spiritual impotency, which affects both Chinese and western Christians alike, is one of the chief difficulties in this whole situation.

One thing is clear, economic power and considerations have, during the era that has just closed, played entirely too prominent a part in Christian work in China. Western control of Christian work in China has been based too much on the fact that it has been built up with western money. Missions and missionaries have spent a large part—often the major part—of their time in deciding how money should be spent. They have thus all too often become shroffs and managers instead of spiritual guides. Their economic significance has often blurred the real meaning of their message. The care of property has all too often hindered the more important care of souls. The inclusion of missionary work in treaties has had much more to do with the protection of property than lives. In short the economic power of the missionary has interfered with the passing on of the spiritual values which are or should be his main concern. That is a fact that needs fuller recognition! To some extent the burden of the control of these economic resources is now being shifted to Chinese shoulders. Nevertheless much missionary energy is still put into managing accounts and property.

All too often, also, economic values and effort have been made the major test of the spirituality of the Chinese Church. The two cannot, of course, be separated. Nevertheless western Christians conscious of the economic power and generosity of their own people tend too much to measure the spiritual life of the Chinese Church in terms of their own economic generosity. On the one hand, Chinese Christians are puzzled as to the relation of present economic standards of Christian work—largely western—to their own independence and, on the other hand, no small proportion of them aim to carry on their work on the basis of these exotic standards no matter where the money comes from. All this results in spiritual confusion. Economic resources and questions instead of being a means to the building up of spiritual vitality all too often become the main end. Thus do material interests become monkey wrenches in spiritual machinery. Christian money is a monkey wrench that must be used in its proper place.

Western Christian gifts to China have not stopped; they will not stop; Chinese Christians do not, in the main, want them to stop. But now a change is coming over Christian work and workers in China. The Revolution has lessened the economic influence and power of western churches in China. For that we are profoundly thankful. Property

rights and money values have been overshadowed by the significance of threats against the existence of Christianity, attacks on the lives of Christians and the emergence of Chinese Christian autonomy. Thus the intellectual and physical persecutions of Christianity have brought its spiritual values into the forefront. The Revolution has, among other things, deepened the spiritual vitality of the Chinese Church.

Looked at humanly one may say that the occupation of Christian property, the temporary stoppage of much economic help, and the threats to life have put spiritual things actually first. They must stay first! To learn how to assist in the development of the spiritual vitality of the Chinese Church, putting economic resources and effort in their proper place, must be the major objective of modern missionaries to China. Speaking providentially we may say that God himself has allowed things to happen that have put economic values in their proper place. They must stay there! But does that mean that they will disappear? Not at all! Does the desire of Chinese Christian leaders for economic help mean that they are willing to sacrifice spiritual strength for economic easement? Not necessarily! Must western churches cut the cord of economic help while continuing to give spiritual help? Some say they must. But to do so would be a new situation indeed! Continuing such economic help under present conditions is also a new situation. It is to this latter contingency that attention must turn.

However, therefore, we approach this problem we find the *new* situation mentioned in the previous chapter. A new situation calls for a change of habit. New principles and methods are needed to meet this new situation. Most, if not all, the solutions proposed up to date are rooted in the *old* psychology of subsidization. The new problem is, How may western Christians *share* their economic resources with Chinese Christians so as to develop the spiritual vitality of *both?*

A later chapter will deal with the economic conflict which is part of this problem. In the meantime I should like to observe that the conflict of opinions thereon is in itself a challenge to a search for fuller understanding and cooperation. We dare not leave the issue in the air. Neither western nor Chinese Christians can meet this challenge alone. They must face it in terms of the *spiritual needs and vitality of both.* To conceive of western Christians attempting to share their spiritual values and closing their purse against the vital needs of those with whom they wish to share lands them in a paradox. To assume even that this is possible is to assume that western churches can be spiritually cooperative and economically isolated at one and the same time. Of course western Christians do not want this. But some of them talk sometimes as though it is inevitable, nevertheless.

In this new situation we find two guiding facts. First, the Chinese Church whether economically independent or not must be self-deter-

mining in all phases of its work, evangelistic, educational and medical. This the revolution in China has made necessary. Second, this church-centric and self-determining Christian Movement in China needs the economic as well as the spiritual and technical help of westerners. The old subsidization habit has been challenged and is breaking down. A new one is called for. To set up this *new* or modified habit of economic sharing between western and Chinese Christians is one of the urgent needs of the hour. Poignancy is given to the urgency of this need by the rising dissatisfaction with the old method of subsidization.

CHAPTER III.

HOW MONEY WORKS

TWO explanations of the growth of the habit of subsidization in the past may be noted. In the first place, western Christians felt themselves under obligation to give something essential to China. They also developed a program designed to fulfil that obligation. The Chinese at first had little or no interest in or understanding of either. In the second place, Christian work and effort has always been, with few exceptions, far in advance of the economic strength of Chinese Christians to carry. No one doubts that this is true of many modern Christian institutions in China. Missionaries have always had more money to spend than Chinese Christians have been accustomed to. Though this has usually been invested in accordance with actual needs yet, owing to Chinese Christian lack of experience in meeting these needs in a modern way, they would often not have known what to do with this money if the spending thereof had been left to them, which was by no means usually the case. Both these aspects of this situation, that is now passing, were, perhaps, inevitable.

Both within and without the Christian Movement interest in its institutional features developed. In consequence the Chinese support of Christian institutions grew rapidly either in the form of fees for educational and medical services or the support of the Church. But this support rarely caught up with the cost of these imported institutional efforts. It was evident in 1922, generally speaking, that support, or part of it, was easier to secure for schools, hospitals and enterprises like the Y.M.C.A., than for purely church work. One explanation is, of course, that a *quid pro quo* was more apparent in the case of the institutions than in that of the Church. However it remains a fact that the economic weakness of Chinese Christians is still operative with regard to all Christian institutions. This economic weakness in itself creates an obligation for those who are economically strong. At least that is how I see it. But it is an obligation that can only be met under conditions that minister primarily to the spiritual needs of the recipients of the fruits of efforts to meet it.

The principle and practise of subsidization has permeated every aspect of Christian work. Perhaps in general its bad effects have been noticed more in connection with church than other forms of work. This may in turn be due to the fact that Chinese support of church work has in general grown more slowly than in the case of other Christian institutions. All this helps to explain why attention is usually concentrated on reducing subsidization in church life.

Here are some of the ways through which the habit of subsidization has been built up.

Western money has been used to stimulate interest in and draw attention to Christianity. Sometimes, though perhaps rarely, it has even been used directly as a bribe. In the early days of Christian schools, for instance, a few cash were sometimes given to children to induce them to attend. I have seen a record of such bribing in mission minutes. This crude form of bribery does not seem, however, ever to have been general and has long since disappeared so far as I know.

Much more general has been the idea that schools and hospitals were founded to win sympathy for the Christian cause; to promote Christianity has been probably the most general motive in subsidization. Such a purpose is legitimate. But it has been overworked, and has sometimes evoked the criticism that such institutions are too propagandic and too little imbued with the real spirit of service.

In general the early Chinese evangelists and assistants to the missionaries were dependent on western churches for support: rarely was there any other source. As soon as a few such workers could depend on local support, even in part, others were needed to push the work into untouched fields. Both the rapid growth of pioneer work and the rising emphasis on institutional effort have served to speed up subsidization. And those who have been in the lead in pushing and promoting the work have furnished its economic sinews. To some extent home missionary societies have sprung up which carry on considerable work on Chinese funds. But it is still true that any comprehensive plan for the future and complete evangelization of China will necessitate a continuance of subsidization unless this problem is laid over until the Chinese Church can carry it all and alone. There is, however, no reason why western Christians should not continue to assist the Chinese Church at this point *if* the Chinese Christians desire it. The issue is where should the responsibility for directing it rest? Of this more later.

In addition to the support of workers much western money has gone and still goes into the upkeep of churches and the erection of buildings. Of course a local group of Chinese Christians might be, and often has been, left to work out their own economic salvation from the beginning. This is what some now advocate as a general policy for all *new* churches. But, as I shall show later, the evidence is as much against as for this plan as an effective one in promoting spiritual vitality.

Conclusive statistics as to what western Christians have contributed financially to any particular form of Christian work in China are not obtainable. But it is true that educational work has proportionately been more heavily subsidized than any other type. This is true of education in the West also. The outstanding feature of the era that has just closed is the rapid development of all types of educational effort. There is, as I have indicated, less hesitancy still about continuing the subsidization of educational than church work.

Standards of educational work are rising very rapidly in China. The Chinese people are slowly but surely getting under the burden. It is evident, therefore, that if Christian schools are to meet the modern educational standards of China economic help will be as necessary for their maintenance as it will be for government schools, even if the number of Christian schools called for goes down, as is quite possible. The Chinese are now practically—certainly nominally—in control of Christian schools. They show no general tendency to discard western financial help in connection therewith. What would happen if they were left to carry this burden alone it is impossible to say. Certainly for the present the Chinese Church could not support by itself an educational system that would hold its own with the government system, inadequate even as that still is.

There are other lines of subsidization such as orphanages, schools for the blind and hospitals. One might in passing mention a modern educational need in China that stands out as a preeminent opportunity for sympathetic western aid. I refer to China's desire to liquidate illiteracy. Already the Mass Education Movement, which started under Christian auspices, is making big inroads upon this problem. Western Christians might well help in this campaign either by assisting the churches or by direct contributions thereto.

Now there is one form of subsidization which is sometimes overlooked—the missionary himself. Chinese Christians are generally agreed that missionaries are still needed and wanted in China. It should not be forgotten, however, that the giving of service is as definitely a form of subsidization as the giving of money. It is assumed—often at least—that the missionary is a striking example of economic sacrifice. But is he? That question must be frankly faced.

When the missionary is viewed against the background of his own civilization there may be some truth in the above assumption. Some missionaries could earn bigger salaries in their home lands than they receive as missionaries. There are also certain hygienic inconveniences and difficulties of inter-civilizational adjustment that sometimes involve loss of comfort and ease for missionaries. I doubt, however, that these are much more serious than those faced by many "home missionaries" in the sending countries. It is also true that a few missionaries having funds of their own live as comfortably in China as at home. It is also true that missionary support in China varies considerably in accordance with the standards of their respective countries, some of them, indeed, live on a relatively low salary. Nevertheless the economic level on which all live is much higher than that of the masses of China.

As a matter of fact this point of missionary sacrifice has now worn rather thin. I am inclined to admit that the average missionary, compared with the average preacher and teacher in his home land suffers

economically little, if at all. And in view of the arrangements under which he works he probably enjoys a greater degree of economic security than most of them, though missionaries never grow rich on what they receive as missionaries. Whether this higher economic security is justified in view of the fact that owing to their being the product of a selective process the missionaries probably average higher in capacity and training than those in their professions at home, or whether this latter assumption is true, I am both unable and reluctant to decide.

As a matter of fact the value of the missionary as an example of economic sacrifice *in* China cannot be determined by viewing him against the background of his own civilization. In so far as compared with those who remain at home he does thus sacrifice that fact has value mainly, if not only, for those who send him. The fact we have to keep in mind is that when the missionary is viewed against the background of the economic struggle of China's millions his sacrificial significance practically disappears. For most of the Chinese he is a member of the well-to-do middle class even though not belonging to the ultra wealthy. Under these circumstances his potency as a stimulant to economic sacrifice in China does not amount to much. He does, it is true, often sacrifice his strength and money and even risk his life. But most of the Chinese who see him in his home and work have little chance to realize these. Furthermore multitudes of them face similar heavy risks, for different reasons, all the time.

The missionaries' position of comparative economic superiority, therefore, vitiates his influence as an example of the economic sacrifice he constantly calls on the Chinese Christians to make. In this regard at least western money works as much against as for them. We must be frank with ourselves about this. It takes much more thought and experience than is possible to the average Chinese observer to see where the sacrificial aspect of a missionary career comes in. In short the way the missionary lives does not conduce to sacrifice on the part of Chinese Christians; it rather stimulates effort for economic improvement. This must be accepted as a missionary responsibility no matter what is done about it.

The desire to speed up interest in and the growth of Christianity has had much to do with the rapid growth of subsidization. Money thus intensifies zeal. This has been an unconscious rather than an avowed policy. Primitive Christians did develop some principles which should govern stewardship and individual giving but had no such purpose or motive as this. Such a way of promoting a purpose is in part due to the impatience of an economically strong man with the slowness of one weak both in interest and in economic strength. This is rooted in a quite natural eagerness. Perhaps this understandable impatience is responsible for many of the undesirable features connected with the sharing

of economic resources even though such sharing is a necessary obligation upon the economically strong man. Economic sharing cannot be discarded; but such impatience must disappear. It too easily turns economic sharing into an economic lure. I have heard of business men investing money in Christian work in China on the basis that the more money invested the greater the result in converts. To view the transformation of character thus is to view it much as one does the transformation of leather into shoes. But it may well be that there is, what a friend of mind called, "an optimum speed" in the growth of Christianity which cannot be superseded without danger. If so it would look as though subsidization has, among other undesirable fruits, led men to overlook that proper speed and seek to hurry things up unduly. This topic can, however, only be hinted at. There are no data on which to venture a conclusion. Nevertheless it is true that an economically strong man may seek to push things forward rather in accordance with his strength than with that of the weaker brother with whom he seeks to cooperate. Certainly that is what has happened!

Another point must be made to bring the whole situation before us. It is true that the generosity of western Christians and their impatience to achieve results has generated a spirit of dependence in many Chinese Christians and churches not only to have the burdens carried which are beyond their strength but, in all too many cases, as easy acquiescence also in having as many other burdens as possible carried by the same generosity. But is this attitude of dependence entirely due to the subsidization policy of western Christians? I think not. As a matter of fact it is in part due to the psychology of the Chinese family life wherein individual independence is ordinarily reduced to a minimum. This family psychology is a fertile soil for economic sharing. When added to the economic weakness of the average Chinese church it results in a subtil but real inhibition to the development of economic self-reliance.

This family practice of sharing makes it easy for Chinese Christians to expect just such a sharing of economic resources within the Christian family as exists within their social family. The rich member of the family is expected to help the rest. The fact that this may be and is overdone in both cases does not, however, eliminate it as an essential aspect of brotherly relationships.

We may dig a little deeper into this comparative sociology. Why do some western Christians somewhat vociferously insist that Chinese Christians *must* be economically independent ere they can enter into the fullness of spiritual vitality? Is there any emphasis in western thinking that will explain in part why the rich western Christian thus demands the same economic effort of his Chinese brother as of himself? "Of course," it will be said again, "primitive Christians were economically indepen-

dent." That reiterated statement is not strictly true. For the rich members of the primitive Christian Church shared their resources with their less favored brethren. Furthermore the "mission" churches founded by Paul gave financial help to the "mother" church in Jerusalem. Some of the early Christians were thus in a measure economically dependent on others. But no one assumes that this sharing or the early and temporary form of Communism, recorded of primitive Christians, necessarily vitiated their spiritual vitality. References to it usually suggest the opposite.

Two western ideas bear directly upon this problem. First, the western appeal to economic sacrific is based upon the fact of private or personal property. It is assumed that Christians, most of them at least, have something of their own to sacrifice. In China the psychology of individual ownership is not prominent. Property is owned more by families or groups than by individuals. We might, therefore, naturally expect that many Chinese Christians, particularly in the rural districts, would have a weak sense of personal ownership. Furthermore the consciousness of the small family group is not usually very distinct from that of the large group of which it is a part. This explains why many Chinese churches, beyond the influence of modern tendencies, are slow to develop that self-consciousness which is indispensable to a real sense of financial responsibility. These together may well explain in part why they are so slow in general to respond to the appeal for economic sacrifice when couched in terms of western philosophy, as it usually is by missionaries. In addition they have had little chance to develop this sense of private ownership, even if it is desirable as a universal practise, which I will not attempt to decide, because they have never or rarely controlled the buildings in which they have gathered as Christians. I do not think this point is altogether academic. In any event those Chinese Christians who are still motivated by the idea of group ownership would find it easy to assume that their richer western brethren should share with them. The appeal to economic sacrifice couched in terms of western philosophy would often fail, therefore, to arouse Chinese Christian minds even if the differences in the basic principles were clear to them, which is usually not the case.

In the second place, westerners are apt to think of equality very largely in economic terms. In general at present the West is aiming mainly at economic equality. It is, therefore, easy for western Christians to assume that ere Chinese Christians can be their spiritual equals they must at least be economically free even if not economically equal. Put another way, western Christians tend to expect Chinese Christians to show an economic fervor equal to theirs even if quantitatively they fall below western standards. But here again Chinese psychology tends to act as an inhibiting factor. The Chinese are, of course, as much

interested in acquiring material things as any other people. But they do not judge the spiritual value of men by their fervor for or their achievements in the economic field. In judging men moral values are uppermost. What ideas they have of human equality are not based on economic considerations. This is true even though they often flatter rich men for their own ends.

The older Chinese psychology, then, tends to lay a light emphasis on the necessity of an individual being economically independent. For Chinese Christians, therefore, the question of whether or not an individual or a Church has *earned* what he or it is using does not loom up so prominently in connection with his spiritual life as it does with that of their western friends. Again this is not simply an academic question. It involves a sociological influence that works subtly but nonetheless surely and must be reckoned with. In Chinese life, therefore, money does not work under the same psychological conditions as in the West. This is perhaps not true of a small minority of Chinese trained and attuned to semi-western conditions in big port cities. But it is true of the great majority of Chinese Christians.

It is as true of the economic effort of the Chinese Christians as it is of the standards and types of their educational and church life that western Christians have looked to them to conform to their own modes of thought and practise. There is thus also needed a change in the western Christian habit of thought as well as in the habit of subsidization. These differences in fundamental thinking as between western and Chinese Christians operate even though there are many modern trained Chinese Christian leaders who are just as earnestly urging the economic self-reliance of the Chinese Church as their western colleagues. One fundamental problem involved for both is not how western Christians shall relieve the Chinese Christians of their economic help but how there may be developed in them a sense of group or individual responsibility. It is an open question whether or not absolute economic self-reliance is essential to this sense of responsibility. If the Christian task in China cannot be achieved on the basis of the economic strength of Chinese Christians alone then their sense of responsibility must be developed in connection *with* economic sharing not apart from it.

Nothing said in this or other chapters is intended to imply that western Christians must share with Chinese Christians just or only because the latter are poor. That easily reduces economic sharing to coddling charity. But it is true that Chinese Christians must not be expected to fit their work or meet their needs on the basis of their poverty. Where and when they share with their richer brethren it must be on the basis of their *common purpose*. The emergence of the Chinese Church has made the substitution of such a common purpose in place of the western-centered one of the past both possible and necessary.

CHAPTER IV.

SOME EXPERIMENTS

WE have, then, two streams of economic effort and influence in Christian work in China, that of the policy of subsidization and that of the policy of the financial self-reliance of the Chinese Church. These tend to disturb rather than to flow into each other.

Now much of the discussion on the relation of western economic resources to the spiritual vitality of the Chinese Church starts practically *de novo* from a local situation and in the mind of an individual or a local group and pays little attention to the experiments that have been, or are being, made elsewhere. In this chapter I wish to put together and evaluate some of these experiments, past and present, so far as I am acquainted with them. They converge in that they all aim at the ultimate or immediate elimination of western money from Chinese church life but diverge widely as regards the methods of achieving this. I shall, for the purpose of identification, give a name of my own to most of these experiments.

In outlining and discussing briefly these experiments I shall aim to answer two important questions. First, does the church or the worker whose work is voluntary and entirely free from the complications involved in receiving external financial aid, show greater singleness of purpose and more marked vitality than that church or worker whose work is subsidized to some extent? Second, does the spiritual vitality of a group of Chinese Christians correlate with the amount of or freedom from subsidization? An affirmative answer is usually given to the first; the second has received very little consideration. I am inclined to think that no final or conclusive answer can be given to either. What light, however, do the following experiments throw thereon?

First, there is the *emergency plan.* This is seen in the case of one large mission that has adopted the policy that in the future every church established shall be self-supporting from the beginning. Nevertheless the mission recognizes that there are emergencies where this policy could not or should not operate. In large cities, such as provincial capitals or trading ports, where property is expensive, it is proposed to modify this policy for a time. This means simply that subsidization will continue indefinitely but will vary in degree with the local economic situation and the strength of urban groups to meet the same. Would not, however, the same principle apply *sometimes* to groups in even smaller and rural centers? The plan actually implies, of course, that subsidization should vary with the economic strength and needs of a particular group or locality but confines its working to those centers where one might expect the economic strength to be higher than in those not so assisted.

But it does not seem to recognize that the economic need of a group in a small center might be just as urgent as that in a large one even though the work concerned might be on a lesser economic scale. That there is a difference in the cost of property in urban and rural centers is obvious. But why conclude that the group in a small center could always handle its economic problem better or easier than that in a large one? Does not the economic strength of each group actually vary with its environment?

Second, there is the *Pauline plan.* The basis of this plan is that the Chinese preacher should earn his own living and preach in addition. It is an attempt to apply a method Paul used, in part at least: though it should not be forgotten that while he had no "board" to back him up financially he did at times receive some help. This plan has been discussed by the National Christian Council and has had some vogue in North China and perhaps some other places. I know, however, of only one church in Peking and one other place where this plan was actually tried. It involves the question as to whether or not there should be a paid ministry in China. The general practise is in favor of a paid ministry and hence runs counter to such a scheme. Opinions thereon vary considerably.[1]

Third, there is the *half-time plan.* In accordance with this plan the preacher is expected to teach part time and preach part time, getting his support from both activities. It differs from the Pauline plan to the extent that while the one involves a Christian worker in earning his living in part the second means that a layman does preaching as an avocation rather than a vocation. I have heard of this plan being tried in several places. Both plans aim at relating the support of the minister to the economic strength of the church concerned. But neither of them has been generally accepted.

Fourth, there is the *self-help plan.* This plan involves the self-support of the missionary as well as of the church concerned. I know personally of only two attempts in China to work it. In one case the missionary sold drugs to pay his own way.[2] Rev. E. J. M. Dickson it was who tried this plan. He started it in 1917. In 1919 he reported a self-supporting church of fourteen members in Poseh, Kwangtung, who paid the rent of their own chapel. A somewhat similar attempt[3] was made in 1922 at Chungwei, Kansu, by Rev. Walter Scott Elliott with this difference that in this latter case the support of the missionary came from his board. In neither case did western money go into the Chinese Church. It should, however, be kept in mind, as I point out elsewhere, that the work of a foreigner in connection with a Chinese church is after all a form of subsidization.

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1. China Mission Year Book, 1924, page 140.
2. Chinese Recorder, June, 1919, page 392.
3. Chinese Recorder, September, 1924, page 599.

Fifth, there is the *self-service plan.* Of this I have heard several times during recent years. According to my information it involves small groups of Chinese Christians in Peking and Shanghai. These groups indulge in little organization. They meet in the home of one of their members. The preaching is done in turn by the members. They have no relation to missions or missionaries. Herein lies its chief distinction from the self-help plan. The members are also mature. It is not primarily an effort to work among non-Christians. Its main aim is to promote, along Chinese lines, the religious life of the Christians in the group. Such groups are in part an off-shoot of the idea that a paid ministry is not essential to or wise for the development of the Christian life in China, an idea which has been most earnestly and frequently discussed in North China Christian circles.

Sixth, there is what is usually called the *Nevius plan.*[4] This is one of the earliest and best known efforts to eliminate the influence of western money from church work in China. The plan was outlined in a book published by Dr. Nevius about 1867. In view of the fact that this plan was publicly advocated in 1922, and that the National Christian Council of China was, at one time, thinking of studying its working in Korea with a view to promoting it again in China, it is well to recall its principal features and its outcome.

According to this plan work in some particular place would be started by a missionary. But there were to be *no paid* native helpers. The preaching when done by Chinese was to be voluntary. Some native Christian was, however, chosen as leader. While the aim of Dr. Nevius was not to give Chinese workers any western money he did, however, subsidize the work to the extent of assisting in securing chapels in some places.

What, in brief, was the outcome of this plan in China? About thirty years later Dr. C. W. Mateer investigated the sixty stations said to have constituted the work of Dr. Nevius[5] in applying his plan. It was found that all but twenty-three had either disappeared entirely or had only a nominal existence. Fifteen of the stations had been assisted to build houses of worship. Most of these buildings had passed into private hands and were no longer used as chapels.

Seventh, there is the *first-aid plan.* This is the name I give to the plan being worked by the London Mission in Chihli.[6] Its main features are as follows. (a) No *local* paid preachers. (b) A mobile force of paid evangelists. (c) Work in any particular district to be started through a visit by a paid evangelist who organizes a class of those who desire to learn to read. These classes may go on for several weeks. Contacts are maintained with these groups, which are expected to develop

4. Chinese Recorder, 1922, pages 20, 89.
5. Chinese Recorder, 1900, pages 109, 163.
6. China Mission Year Book, 1924, page 141.

spontaneously. Occasional visits are made by the paid evangelists for inspirational purposes. The actual form in which the work develops depends, however, on the particular group. The aim is financial self-dependence as regards local needs from the start. There is, however, some indirect subsidization as noted above.

To all these must be added, as the eighth experiment, the long-tried and widespread *diminishing-subsidy plan.* This plan aims at a *gradual* diminishing of western money with the hope that Chinese funds will grow *pro rata* until complete financial independence is achieved. Being a plan that is more generally advocated than any other it needs careful scientific investigation to determine how it works and how far it has been actually successful in achieving its aim. Opinions thereon and practise in connection therewith differ too much to permit anyone at present to attempt to evaluate it conclusively.

One may note, however, a few obvious difficulties connected with it. It involves elaborate and sometimes intricate bookkeeping which has usually fallen in large part on the missionary. Such financial bookkeeping is one of the things that missionaries might do well to reduce to a minimum or even discard, if at all possible. One is curious to know in how many cases these schemes for the diminishing of subsidies have quietly succumbed in mission or church archives just because of weariness and lack of time to attend to them. In any event the unavoidable complexity of this plan works against its effectiveness.

It is, of course, usually assumed that if and when—the time for the consummation of these schemes has continually to be pushed forward!—the Chinese churches liquidate their subsidies that the funds released will be put into new work. Thus this scheme usually assumes that subsidization as such will go on indefinitely somewhere. However the relation of such subsidies to *new* church work is one of the most warmly debated aspects of the whole problem. But be this as it may it is often overlooked that Christian work, even in established centers, will not and should not stand still while the churches concerned are liquidating their subsidies. One Methodist mission, for instance, succeeded in stimulating an encouraging rise of Chinese financial effort only to discover that instead of any foreign funds being set free for new work they were all required to help meet increases in salaries and other advances which had emerged in the old work. Another church became so intent on attaining *self*-support that it cut out contributions to weaker churches and missionary work. Its urge to self-support made it too *self*-centered. One wonders how much of this sort of thing a really scientific investigation of the working of this plan would disclose. It is clear, however, that often, perhaps usually, with the growth in Chinese financial effort there goes also a growth in work and expenses that under this scheme puts off spiritual autonomy indefinitely if the latter is made

contingent upon the former. Does this mean that the diminishing-subsidy plan can only be fully successful where the work is static? No conclusive answer is possible to that question. It is clear, however, that Christian work in China cannot afford to be tied down to such a condition as that at any time in any place. The development of spiritual values and the growth of Christian work must certainly take the precedence of economic self-reliance in and for itself.

Finally certain plans are developing which aim to fit the economic relationship of western to Chinese Churches into more recent developments. These may well be mentioned here.

First, there is the plan whereby funds for Christian work coming from the West are disbursed by a committee representing both western and Chinese bodies. This plan permits the voice of the direct representatives of the donors to be heard, and also permits of a measure of western Christian influence to be directly exerted in connection with such funds. It must, however, be noted that it is precisely the direct economic influence of missionaries who have a controlling voice in the disposal of economic resources that constitutes one of the difficulties in the present situation. And even when he does not control the funds his economic significance often gives, in a subtil but real way, the vote of the missionary concerned an added weight. One respected Chinese pastor once, for instance, spoke of the treasurer of the mission, with which his work was connected, as the "Pope" of the denomination, in spite of the fact that all the work of that mission is under a council on which there are a majority of Chinese. This subtil economic power of the missionary must pass away.

Second, there is the plan whereby all funds coming from the West are turned over to church and institutional groups in China to control. Western Christian workers in China may or may not be on these groups as the Chinese interested may decide. Usually, however, they are. Chinese Christian leaders show no disposition to assume recklessly such financial responsibilities or to discard the advice of their western colleagues in meeting them.

Third, it is sometimes suggested that all funds from the West should be given outright to Chinese churches or organizations when given at all. This plan is not as prominent as the other two. The argument advanced for it is that such funds are for the Lord's work and should therefore, when given, be free from strings. Personally I am inclined to favor this plan. At least its features and implications should be frankly and fully faced. It would certainly tend towards lessening, if not eliminating, the economic power of the missionary.

All but one of the experiments and plans given above are due to missionary initiative. Not one of them has received general approval and thus been accepted for general imitation. They were not always

adopted generally in China by the missions with which their sponsors were connected. This may be due to sheer inertia, lack of understanding and knowledge of them, or to difference in local conditions. Their failure in this regard must be noted nevertheless. None of them prove that Christian work grows more rapidly in connection therewith than as the result of the subsidizing policy. As a matter of fact the development of Christian work in China is in the main the fruit of subsidization whatever its limitations. This fact must be kept in mind.

No foreign funds are used in connection with the *self-service* or Chinese fellowship experiment. One controlling idea of all other experiments is that it is *Chinese control* of western money that militates against their spiritual vitality. Only two of the experiments outlined above assume the entire elimination of western money from the work with which they are connected. Some of them recognize that this western money will have an effect upon the standards of work; some of them do not. It appears, therefore, that most of the promotors of these plans did not deem the *use* of western money in Christian work in China the chief difficulty. The issue or danger would seem to be rooted in the *Chinese control* thereof. Nevertheless the present tendency is to increase this Chinese control if western money is to be used wisely in China. There must, therefore, be a shift in the fulcrum of control.

What, then, do these plans prove as to the effect of the presence or absence of western money on the spiritual life of Chinese Christian groups? Most of the schemes are too local or too recent to permit of drawing any inferences therefrom. Of course their sponsors believe in them. All of them urge the necessity of so arranging economic help that Chinese Christians may help themselves. They have, of course, no bearing on the necessity for western Christians to share their economic resources as well as their spiritual message. But do they prove that where Chinese Christian life is not complicated with subsidization its initiative and vitality will be freer and fuller or that Chinese Christian spiritual vitality correlates with the absence or presence of western money? Actually they cannot be used as proving anything either way. The *self*-service plan might prove something had it grown rapidly. This it did not do. It could hardly be applicable to pioneer work anyhow. The Nevius and the first-aid plans are the most notable of those listed above. Neither of them eliminated the *use* of western money entirely. Both have good features. But neither of them proves that their way of using western money necessarily builds up the spiritual life of the Chinese church quicker or better than many others. Certainly this is true of the Nevius plan as outlined above.

A report[7] of the *first-aid* plan covering ten years of its operation was made in 1925. The plan has borne good fruit. But what of its

7. Indigenous Ideals in Practice, World Dominion Press, London.

bearing on the spiritual life? The report makes several admissions which forbid one concluding that it provides the key to building up spiritual vitality in China. "We cannot say," it admits, (page 16) "that the 'fruits of the Spirit' have as yet been manifested in a superlative degree in these churches". Again we read (page 20) that these churches or Christians *"lack . . . . strong personal religion"* and *"appreciation of the ethical demands of Christianity"*. But lacking these qualities in any degree these Chinese Christians lack the chief fruits of Christian faith! Whether or not this plan speeds up the production of these fruits seems, therefore, to be still a matter for conjecture.

Why these two outstanding efforts to solve the problem of the relation of western money to Chinese Christian life have thus failed at the most important point we cannot say. It would seem clear, however, that the partial absence or presence of western money is not the chief deciding factor. Reference may be made at this point to some other experiments bearing directly on this problem. I put them together here in order to make clear the conflicting nature of the evidence bearing thereon. Of the churches in South Fukien it is asserted that their independence has resulted in greater freedom of initiative and activity. The case of the Kumai churches in Korea, however, seems to be exactly the opposite. "Their growth," it is asserted,[8] "has been neither rapid or spectacular . . . . This is doubtless due, in part at least, to insistence upon the general principle of self-support and independence for the local group". The reason for such diverse results from the application of the same general principle cannot be given. Apparently no careful study has been made of the actual and determining factors in each situation. The experience of the home missionary effort of the Chung Hua Sheng Kung Hui also bears on this point. This work has been going on for over a decade. From the first it has been an effort to "do the work with a purely Chinese staff and support it with purely Chinese offerings." It is an enterprise that meets the conditions inherent in the principle that spiritual vitality correlates with financial self-reliance. It was started with enthusiasm and has done much good. Nevertheless this mission organization is meeting with great difficulty in collecting funds for its work. In his report, as given in 1928, the President of the General Board of Missions, which has charge of this enterprise, explains this situation as follows. "Perhaps in our eagerness for self-support," he says, "and in the midst of our parochial activities we have either purposely or unconsciously forgotten the responsibilities of our missionary support. . . . The trouble is that we are too much self-centered about our own work." It is interesting to note that he also suggests that in order to solve the problem a Chinese bishop is necessary which

8. Korea Mission Year Book 1928, page 150.

implies that the problem could be more easily solved if control were altogether vested in the Chinese. In any event the experience of this enterprise does not show that dependence on "purely Chinese offerings" necessarily results in a vital spiritual and economic response on the part of Chinese Christians to an enterprise which is, in an economic sense, certainly their own.

Since these various experiments do not prove that spiritual vitality necessarily results when western money is diminished or absent they likewise do not prove that it cannot develop when western money is used. Its presence or absence seems to be a matter of quite secondary significance. In fact, on the main problem of building up the spiritual life of Chinese Christians these experiments throw very little light.

The fact is that all these experiments reproduce methods that have been utilized in the expansion of Christianity for a long time. Christianity has never depended upon any one method for its growth. Voluntary and subsidized work have existed together. These experiments do not prove that the Christian Movement in China can or should depend solely on lay effort or Chinese money. Neither do they show that churches left to work out their economic salvation alone necessarily achieve spiritual success thereby. Nor do they prove that Chinese Christian spiritual vitality correlates with the presence or absence of foreign money. Indeed it is possible to find spiritual vitality or its absence in both subsidized and unsubsidized churches. The relation of western money thereto is, therefore, a relative not an absolute one. One difficulty heretofore is that missionaries have ignored this relativity and held up a principle—economic self-reliance—as *absolutely* necessary to the building up of spiritual vitality in China. Now we must recognize that the mere presence or absence of western money is not the main determining factor and find out what is. In this search much help might be derived from a study of home mission work in western lands for the problems are very similar. But such a study does not fall within the purview of this study.

This brief survey may well be concluded with a reference to another experiment. Both the National Christian Council and the National Committee of Y. M. C. A.'s in China are assisted financially from the West. The Y. M. C. A. assists its local associations with service. All these groups are self-governing; and through all these cases runs the one principle of "cooperation without control." The Y.M.C.A., for instance, does receive some western economic help and probably will in either direct or indirect ways for a long time. They have solved their problem not by eliminating western economic help but by putting those who receive it into a new relation thereto. They have untied the Gordian knot of its control. Is not this experiment worthy of more general emulation?

CHAPTER V.

THE ECONOMIC GAP

ECONOMIC relationships between western and Chinese Christians are troubled, then, first, by the inertia of an old habit; second, by an impractical ideal. The first sounds like a spent bullet; the second looks like a wet flag! As I look over twenty-five years' experience in mission meetings I realize that in spite of the rushing flood of much laudable eloquence on the problem the main result has usually been to leave things as they were. Eloquent opinions thereon have often been in spate. And still they flow! But the one sure thing about these tides of opinions is that their eloquent authors never arrive at any but one conclusion—they agree to differ and resolve to subsidize in some way! Most, though not all, of this eloquence has flowed from missionary lips. It almost looks as though western economic resources belong to that group of things the Chinese Church can neither get along without and does not know what to do with. To admit that, however, is to admit also that spiritual impotency is inevitable! I do not admit either!

"The economic needs of the Chinese Church," say some, "must be met in large part by western Christians." Others aver that all western money must be cut out of Chinese Christian life. These are the two extreme opinions. Between them are, as we have seen, various and sometimes complicated schemes to reduce gradually to the vanishing point western financial contributions to Chinese churches.

Those who burn midnight oil elaborating schemes to reduce funds asked from boards often overlook, as I have said, the fact that the work does not or should not stand still while the Chinese churches or schools liquidate their subsidies. As a rule, also, the generous donors of these subsidies are at the same time elaborating programs to *spend more of their money* in building up their own denominational empires. That seems to be inevitable! Western money thus supports Christian competition. Such a criticism is, at least, often heard. That missionary or group, however, who by dint of much grim determination makes one of these schemes work at once feels sure that it will prove a general panacea! And yet in spite of these schemes the curve of western subsidization of Christian work in China has risen rapidly!

A double-headed problem is constantly bobbing up. Must the standards of Christian work in China, churches, schools and hospitals, be lowered to fit the economic strength of the Chinese or must they be continued as heretofore until the economic strength of the Chinese has risen to these imported western standards? No final answer to this question is possible because standards vary with different groups and

localities. The situation is also complicated by the fact that the western cultural impact upon China is raising the standard of China's religious, educational, cultural and economic life. For tribal groups in the far south-west of China and other interior places the standards may be allowed to fit their status because they are as yet little disturbed by extra-China economic stimulations. Under such conditions churches easily attain a large measure of economic independence with low standards. But in many other sections of China economic standards and cultural and institutional ideals are rising much *faster* than the economic strength of the Chinese. This change affects large sections of the Chinese Christians.

Some claim, of course, that the elimination of western money need not affect Christian standards of equipment or effort in China. Others claim, on the contrary, that certain imported standards are essential to an effective Christian program. Differences of opinion on this matter are found not only in the minds of missionaries; Chinese Christians do not agree thereon either.

Some urge that a *spontaneous* religious experience is impossible for Chinese churches so long as they receive any western money. But why *western* money should particularly vitiate Chinese spirituality while Chinese money need not, neither missionaries nor Chinese Christian leaders make clear to my mind. Does western money impose something upon Chinese Christians that Chinese money is free from? Do, for instance, the churches supported or helped by the Chinese Home Missionary Society succeed where some mission supported churches fail, just because the money comes from a Chinese source? I doubt it! In all probability the answer is that western money carries with it superimposed conditions that militate against spiritual vitality. It may be, however, that these superimposed conditions are not indispensables of western economic sharing with the Chinese Church and people.

In any event, for large sections of the Chinese Church, the standards of work they have acquired are so high that they cannot economically carry them. There is an economic gap between them and their economic strength. Must they, therefore, be abandoned? The consensus of opinion seems to be against such a wholesale abandonment of standards and work already in operation. But why cannot these higher standards of work be maintained and spiritual vitality still be attained? There is little evidence to show that these standards in themselves, any more than subsidization or its absence, determine the spiritual vitality of Christians. Neither has any conclusive evidence yet been brought forward to show that those groups who plod along on low standards of work and equipment are more vital spiritually than those working on higher ones. I am inclined, indeed, to think that the burden of proof points in the other direction.

We need to remember that it has been the economically strong who have been cooperating with and setting the standards for the economically weak. The result has not been altogether satisfactory.

We are constantly being referred back to the days of primitive Christianity for solutions for modern Christian economic problems in China. But it is a blind clue! We must, it is true, try and recapture the spiritual radiance of the early Christians. The independence, spontaneity and simplicity of early Christian fellowship are also as necessary to-day as then. There were, of course, rich and poor people then as now, both in and out of the Christian fellowship. But the tremendous difference of economic levels now existing between the "sending" and "receiving" groups of Christians did not then exist. Christ Himself, when he called on men to follow Him, spoke from the economic level of the masses. The modern missionary, on the contrary, calls from a high economic level and usually lives in a condition of economic superiority. He thus speaks from an economic level far above that of China's masses! The missionaries of the primitive Church had their trials: but economic influence and superiority were not among them. They did not have to fill up or bridge an economic gap!

Thus neither the early churches nor their missionaries can furnish precedents for the modern situation. Early missionaries dealt only in spiritual gifts because they had no others. "Silver and gold have I none but such as I have give I unto you." This the modern missionary cannot and rightfully has not attempted to say, though now as then these spiritual gifts should be his main concern. The early Christian workers faced a hostile world. But in some ways their task was easier than that of modern missionaries. Not their's or the early Christian's the task of building up great institutions and seeking to save society as well as the individual. In our day we cannot dodge these issues if we would. Here and there one hears a Chinese Christian leader urge that churches in China should do exactly as primitive Christians did, have preachers supported only by themselves and engage in no institutional work they cannot carry on themselves. To rigidly apply such principles in China would mean a revolution backward! Under the actual conditions as existing it sounds almost visionary! While man's need for God is the same now as in the days of the primitive Christians his environment is vastly different. The modern Christian must meet his environment. The churches of Galatia, for instance, were not forced to face the challenge of rising to the higher and different economic and industrial levels and standards of the Church in Jerusalem! China as a whole faces just that type of problem! To be a member of the modern family of nations she must climb to higher economic as well as educational and scientific levels. The modern Chinese and western churches

cannot sidestep this modern Chinese problem: it cannot be extricated from their spiritual task.

Unless the modern missionary is willing to step down from his level of economic superiority and live like his economically weak Chinese brethren he cannot dissociate himself entirely from economic power and significance. Apparently most Chinese and missionaries do not deem such a change of life necessary or wise. Therefore, they cannot ignore the economic gap inherent in the situation.

Western churches are now rich in economic resources as well as in spiritual experience. Missionaries in China do not demonstrate the economic equality which Christ taught and practised. Their experience in their own lands does not help them much in China. There they live and work on a level which is, generally speaking, equal to that of the average of those whom they serve. At least that is the ideal. Since in China, to most of their fellow Christians, they live like rich people, they are liable to be understood as holding, on the one hand, that for themselves a fairly high economic level is essential to spiritual vitality or physical efficiency but that, on the other hand, the Chinese can attain both on a much lower one. "But if," they may be asked, "a low economic level is sufficient for Chinese spiritual vitality would not a similar or much more nearly approximate one quicken the spirituality of our western friends?" For a rich man to tell a poor man that he can and should be as good and happy though poor is really to expect the poor man to make a bigger effort than himself. It is not an inspiring expectation! These two economic levels will have to come together either by the lower being raised or the higher coming down. In any event western Christians and churches working in China have here a problem to be solved; it cannot be shelved. Neither can it be settled by each group withdrawing into its own civilization and living and working apart. That would not be Christian!

The two theories bearing on this question have already been mentioned. One is that spiritual vitality is dependent exclusively, humanly speaking, upon complete reliance on one's own strength and resources. This means that spirituality does not correlate with any particular economic status. This is true, but it does not follow, however, that poverty and wealth have no bearing on the spiritual life. It does assume that Chinese Christians can be as spiritually strong as their western brethren no matter what the difference of economic level between them. But this is one of the theories that sadly needs testing! The fact is that in their practice missionaries apparently accept a fairly high degree of economic security as necessary for their spiritual as well as their physical life. Some do, it is true, assume that while their present economic level is essential to physical efficiency it is not as closely bound up with their spiritual vitality. Yet all would agree that the two in-

fluence each other. For my part I now realize that the economic level of life may sink so low as to militate against all other aspects thereof, including the spiritual. And I am convinced that the low vitality of many Chinese is due to their utterly inadequate level of subsistence. When it is claimed, as is sometimes done, that the Chinese can be efficient on a lower economic level than westerners, does this mean that a *difference of race* makes it possible to attain an equally high spiritual vitality on a much lower economic level? Perhaps not! Yet the attitude of some westerners justifies such an inference.

This I know to be true that the lure of economic well-being affects the economically weak just like physical robustness attracts those who are weak of body. Those who are comparatively well-off, whether missionaries working in China or people elsewhere, lure poorer people to aspire to be as economically secure as they are. They stand on the other side of the economic gap between them and their more favored friends and wistfully long to cross it. The presence of relatively rich mission aries naturally leads Chinese Christian workers also to desire to be at least equally rich. Their wistfulness to share another's lot easily merges into discontent with their own. This is, so far as I can see, natural, right and inevitable!

The other theory is that when Christians work together they should share all they have. But can western Christians share *all* they have without vitiating the spiritual life of the Chinese Church? This they must learn to do or block the free flowing of their spiritual resources. Let me hasten to add that I do not think absolute economic equality is essential to spiritual intercourse and vitality as between western and Chinese Christians or between any Christians. Nevertheless I feel that this second theory is the one that promises most towards a solution. It seems to be the only theory that offers hope of solving in a fair way the double-headed problem of the two economic levels as described above.

There is, then, an economic gap between the living of the missionaries and that of the masses of the Chinese people. As a result of Christian effort the economic standards of many Christian communities also tend to be higher than those of their environment. The continued sharing of western economic resources with these Chinese Christian communities will, insofar as it increases their productivity, tend also to preserve this gap between them and those among whom they live. A proportion of Chinese leaders receive as much support as their foreign colleagues. Such stand, therefore, on the same side of the gap as the missionaries, and often are the target for the same criticisms. What then, should be the attitude of the Chinese Church, and particularly the missionaries—as it is they who have in large part revealed this gap—towards the chronic poverty from which most Chinese and many Chinese Christians suffer?

This economic gap is visible from three angles, the living standards of the missionaries, the institutional standards of Christian work and the difference between the general economic standards of China and the West. What should Christians do about it? They might, of course, ignore it. But that will lay them open to the charge of lacking human sympathy. They may recognize it but claim that bridging or filling it is not their task. Clearly it is not the task of Christians alone. But they can only justify this attitude by showing that a low economic level has no effect on the spiritual life. This they cannot do. They may deplore the fact that their higher economic privileges create special difficulties for their work and then decide to leave the difficulties to eliminate themselves. But that attitude, as I have indicated, will bog them in spiritual impotency. In this economic gap modern Christians face a challenge that only modern methods can solve.

There are, it seems to me, two things that the Chinese Church, in which I include the missionaries, should, indeed *must,* do. First, it should recognize that the economic standards of the Chinese masses are too low for satisfactory living, economic or spiritual. This could be done by their definitely espousing the raising of those standards and the filling up thereby in time of the economic gap. "In the middle ages," says one previewer of these chapters, "it was assumed that poverty was necessary in order to provide for the virtue of charity (I have heard a modern Christian advance the same notion!) Our modern thought revolts at this notion." Chronic poverty is no more ethically justifiable than wasteful wealth. Furthermore charity is no longer deemed a solution for the disadvantages of either. Now sharing one's economic resources with another as a demonstration of brotherhood and for a *common* purpose is something quite different from charity, against which the Chinese Church and people are protesting with increasing earnestness. Under such circumstances western Christians must be willing not only to share their economic resources for church and propaganda purposes but also to share their higher and more human economic standards and methods. That is one way whereby the missionary may take the sting out of his economic superiority. That such a raising of China's economic standards is necessary is already recognized in the tendency towards the economic equality of western and Chinese Christian workers in China, which is as it should be, even though these Chinese Christian workers thereby face the same difficulties as their equally favored foreign colleagues. Difficulties there will be no matter how the problem is approached! But I doubt that the difficulties inherent in a Christian espousal of the raising of China's economic standards are as great as those ensuing from ignoring it or leaving it entirely to others to solve.

But the Church in China must, in the second place, go farther than this. It must help promote those forms and methods of human labor

that will increase individual productivity and so tend towards a raising of China's economic standards. It is worth noting here that many who argue that economic self-reliance is essential to the spiritual vitality of the Chinese Church also admit that neither will be possible unless the productive capacity of its members is increased.

As a matter of fact the programs of the Jerusalem Meeting and of the National Christian Council of China include the doing of both these things. Present-day Christian interest and effort in industrial and agricultural improvement and vocational education also aim at both of them. Famine relief organizations are laying much more emphasis than formerly on increasing the productivity of sufferers therefrom, with a view to preventing the dire results of famine, than on the mere giving of charitable doles. All these are direct efforts to close the economic gap. But it needs to be much more generally and generously recognized by the Church that espousing and promoting higher standards of living in China are part of the Christian's responsibility.

To espouse and promote definitely the closing of this economic gap will lesson the danger inherent in the assumption that the economic benefits of Christianity are open mainly or only to those *within* its ranks. Of course so long as this gap exists it will be impossible to eliminate entirely the economic lure inherent in a high economic level to those struggling on a low one. The comparatively rich western Christians who desire to cooperate with the Chinese Church may as well admit this. This gap, furthermore, will remain for a long time. But it is possible to weaken greatly this lure in relation to Christianity by dissociating entirely the opportunity to share in its higher institutional and economic advantages from the appeal to follow Christ. That would be one result of making attendance on religious services and classes voluntary in Christian schools. On the other hand to make these serve only the Christian community would tend to increase the lure thereof to those outside so long as Christian schools offer any special economic advantages.

All this means that the cultural, institutional and economic opportunities offered by Christianity must not be limited to those who have espoused it or are related to those who have joined the Church. I am well aware that this principle is opposed to one current nowadays. But it must be remembered that Christianity offers a lure to the "rice-Christian" type whenever and wherever becoming a Christian carries with it economic privileges not obtainable otherwise. This is an argument for making all Christian institutions a means of service to humanity rather than propagandic agents or aids to building up the Church alone. If these economic privileges are free the lure will be reduced to a minimum at least. Unless, therefore, Christian institutional service is to be reduced to the economic level of the average Chinese Christian

and those helped thereby, which few if any contemplate, this principle must needs receive more recognition than heretofore accorded it. This is the way I see it as I try to measure the meaning of the economic gap.

"But what about the psychology of dependence," some one will say, "to which you have already referred?" I admit readily that this is one of the dangers involved when a rich brother works with a poor brother. But I am far from convinced that to have the rich brother share his economic strength with his weaker brother need necessarily prevent the weaker brother from doing his *full* share. Of two partners in an enterprise one may invest half a million, the other only one thousand dollars. But it does not follow that the smaller investor does less for the enterprise than the bigger one. He may put into it his energy and all he has. But I do not like this illustration anyhow. Both these investors expect to get *money* out of their common investment thereof. Western churches do not invest money in Christian work in China for that purpose.

At this point we may well refer to what has been one of the chief psychological dangers in connection with subsidization. It has been a scheme whereby much has been *done for* the Chinese instead of being *done with* them. Wherever subsidization is under control of the subsidizers that aspect of the situation is bound to come into prominence. Plans for the future must aim at a change in this psychology. The Chinese Christian will not rise to the doing of his full share so long as it operates. As a result of this psychological danger dependence is developed to the point where it does frustrate the full use of the recipient's own resources. Let it be kept in mind that a Chinese Christian might invest only $100 in an institution as over against $100,000 by a western friend and yet the merit of the Chinese gift be as great as that of the other if it represented the *maximum effort* possible in both cases. But to have the rich brother looked on as indifferent to the economic problems of his weaker brother—that is a danger to be avoided at any cost! Such indifference on the part of the rich Christian would have as deadening an effect on the spirit of the Chinese Christian as an undue measure of dependence. Both must be averted. How western Christians could withhold their economic resources from the Chinese Church, or even reduce it to service only, without at least giving the appearance of such indifference I do not see. How, furthermore, an economically indifferent western Christian could transfer anything spiritually alive to Chinese Christians I do not see either. Neither do I see how the extreme opinion that Chinese spiritual vitality cannot be secured until Chinese Christians are economically isolated from western Christian could be applied unless western Christians developed just such an attitude of indifference. It is for these reasons that I question the validity of the extreme opinion as cited.

Another, though perhaps subsidiary, danger which is connected with over-emphasis on Chinese economic self-reliance may well be cited at this point. Western Christians tend to make economic self-reliance the *sina qua non* of self-respect. Certainly no one can be self-respecting unless he does his full share in any cooperative enterprise. Nevertheless too heavy an emphasis may be laid at this point. That this is true may be seen in the fact that there is a tendency to measure churches in China mainly in terms of their economic efficiency. That, in so far as it exists, is to make their ability to raise money the test of their spiritual vitality. That this is not a matter of pure inference only is seen in the statement made by a graduate of a prominent theological school in China that ability to raise special funds is a *sina qua non* of missionary effort. I do not wish to make too much of this point. But it is clear that unless care is taken, over-emphasis on economic self-reliance as the essential of self-respect may result in an overweening self-respect that will cut the cord of a wider and equally essential sympathy with the needs of others.

In accordance with the nature of the Christian spirit and relationship it is *necessary*, as I have stated, that western Christians continue to share their economic resources with the Chinese Church and people until such time at least as the present extreme difference in their economic standards has disappeared. That time is still far shead!

One thing is evident. The Church in China has not yet developed and espoused one guiding purpose in its economic relationships. In the era of Christian work in China that is passing, western Christians had a purpose or purposes, around which the work was built up. But as yet no unifying purpose in the use of western economic resources in China that fits a *Church-centric situation* has been evolved. Existing ideas on this problem are motivated by both an old momentum and new aspirations. Either a new purpose or principle must be created or some existing principle exalted to the primary place. This principle or purpose must embody both the western Christian obligation to share all it has and the Chinese Christian responsibility to use and supplement it. We must get out of the bramble of conflicting opinions found on both sides of the economic gap.

CHAPTER VI.

FLANK MOVEMENTS

TO obviate the spiritually debilitating aspects of western Christian subsidization of Christian work in China several schemes are advocated from time to time which do not assume that it must needs be entirely independent of western money. These are methods to improve its use rather than eliminate it. They belong to present-day thinking anent the problem. None of these schemes, any more than the experiments to eliminate it already cited, are *generally* accepted. They are of the nature of flank movements on an entrenched habit. All of them assume that in some way or other western Christians must of necessity share their economic resources with the Chinese Church. All of them assume, also, that the chief difficulty connected with this economic sharing centers in the Chinese Church though few if any of their sponsors explain clearly or in any uniform way this assumption. Not one of these schemes is a solution that fits all the necessities of the future of Christianity in China.

Some advocate that mission boards and western Christians should confine their contribution to the Christian Movement in China to the work of missionaries and their support: that is, give service instead of money. Such advocates assume that there is a real difference between the effects of contributed service and money upon the spiritual life. It is certainly undesirable that western Christians should contribute only money to the Chinese Church or its work. But is it possible for them to contribute only service? The spiritual influence of contributed personnel is indispensable to Christian cooperation and may, considered by itself, be more effective and less complicating in general than money. To limit the western Christian contribution in this way, however, would mean that all Christian work in China, outside of the support of missionaries and their actual service, would have to be borne by the Chinese Church. Of this there is little or no likelihood or possibility for a long time. This policy, therefore, even if the correct one is impossible of realization except perhaps in some special cases. As a matter of fact a large proportion of the western Christian contribution to China is already in the form of service. The major part of the money—estimated to be about Gold $10,000,000 annually—sent by western Christians to China goes into the support of missionaries. There is, however, a tendency developing for the Chinese Church to ask that money be substituted for missionaries. It is evident, therefore, that the distinction between the two does not always operate in the mind of those Chinese who seek western Christian aid. Certainly it is not an immediately

feasable plan. When the gap between the economic levels of the Christian Movement and the masses of China is closed up this might well become the dominant policy of Sino-western Christian cooperation. But what is needed is some policy that will develop the spiritual vitality of the Chinese Church even now while it continues of necessity to use western economic resources as well as its own.

The sponsors of this plan assume, also, that western money, if used only in support of western Christian workers in China, would be freed from *all* the debilitating spiritual effects now charged against it. It is true, of course, that if the missionaries did not spend money in or on behalf of the Chinese Church their purse-power in or over that Church would be practically eliminated. This missionary purse-power must, however, be eliminated whether the Chinese Church uses or does not use western economic resources! It is the crux of the missionary's difficulties. We are compelled to find some way of sharing western economic resources with the Chinese Church that does not carry with it this purse-power of the missionary. That is obvious!

But assuming that the purse-power of the missionary has been or is yet to be eliminated would that mean that western Christians could share their economic resources with the Chinese Church by merely supporting missionaries and at the same time maintain with it a spiritual relationship freed from all economic significance and difficulties? I fear not. For this arrangement would not eliminate the economic significance of the missionary himself as has already been shown. Living on an economic level of comparative security and plenty he would be called on to work with and serve those of whom the vast majority must live in economic insecurity and want. The higher standards of living made possible for subsidized Chinese preachers causes, as we have hinted also, jealousy and discontent on the part of those whom they serve and who are less fortunate. Could the missionaries live among the Chinese in economic superiority and avoid causing, to some extent at least, the same effects in both preachers and laymen? I doubt it, even though some claim that the economic superiority of the missionary stings the Chinese less sharply than that of the Chinese workers who are raised to an equal or approximate level. Could western Christians thus support their representatives in comparative economic ease and security and maintain with the Chinese Christians that bond of sympathy which is essential to the spiritual vitality of all of them? The answer is obvious! That is it is obvious unless it is assumed that economic security is essential to western spiritual life to a degree that it is not essential to Chinese spiritual life either in or without the Church. But this assumtion has only, as already intimated, a moribund validity! Actually the economic standards and practice of missionaries have been factors in creating discontent in China with existing economic standards and

practices. Missionaries have thus had a cultural as well as a religious influence! This is true even though the Chinese idea of economic security is rooted in the group life and that of the westerner in individual ownership of what is needed to maintain life.

What of the criticism sometimes aimed at Chinese Christian workers that they hesitate to go to China's hinterland and work and live on economic standards which give practically no economic security and are insufficient to meet the needs up to which their education has trained them? That some are reluctant to make this economic sacrifice is true enough. It is a real difficulty. It is another fruit of the influence of western economic standards. But for missionaries to indulge in such criticism is for them to urge others to do what they do not do. It is another point at which they become weak exemplars of sacrifice. Such criticism sounds hollow and touched with hypocritical overtones! Even when missionaries enter upon pioneer work they never accept fully, often not at all, the economic standards of the localities they serve as their own. Thus the critics do not share in the economic struggle which they expect their co-laborers to accept cheerfully. I do not say missionaries should lower their economic standards. I have, in fact, implied otherwise. But I do say they must cease to criticise those who hesitate to accept an economic struggle which they themselves escape!

Here is one question—expansion of another point already made—I should like western Christians working in China to face frankly. Could they preserve their spiritual vitality if they lived on the economic level of most of the Chinese Christians? It is a question that persistently intrudes itself amidst the criticism of Chinese Christian leaders who hesitate to live down to such a level. For myself I can frankly say I do not think I could wisely attempt it. That is a personal admission that a certain level of economic security seems essential to spiritual as well as physical health even though I cannot decide where that level should be. Having taken that position for myself I hesitate to claim that others should do what I question would be wise in my own case. Judged by the way they actually live most missionaries act on a similar assumption. To hold it is not to desire to be rich. But to practise it or frankly advocate it necessitates great caution when telling others what they should do. I, for instance, prefer to urge, as I have done, that Christians should do all they can to raise China's economic level to one where spiritual vitality is assured rather than to urge the Chinese to climb high spiritually on an economic outfit that I count insufficient to enable me to make the same climb. Missionaries not infrequently take pains to show that they could not maintain their physical or spiritual vitality on the average Chinese economic level. That is all right! But has not the time come for them to answer this question also. "Can or should the Chinese do this"?

I do not mean to imply, of course, that economic security necessarily insures spiritual vitality. It does not! Yet am I profoundly convinced that weakening poverty creates difficulties for the spiritual life as well as wealthy affluence. I am not sure that such a balance between devastating poverty and numbing wealth can be found that will altogether eliminate these difficulties. But I am sure that it is a consideration that missionaries and Chinese Christian leaders living on a comparatively high economic level need to keep in mind when trying to work with those struggling on a low one.

In any event it is evident that if western Christians confined their contribution to China to missionary service they would not thereby do away with all the difficulties inherent in the impact of a higher economic level upon a lower one. As a scheme for solving the problems arising in the conflict of these two economic levels it is not, therefore, as simple, easy or effective as at first sight it appears to be.

Another idea, both more frequently heard and more popular, is that the boards and missionaries should, as rapidly as possible, throw all or most of their resources and efforts into evangelizing China's *unreached* areas. This means that existing Christian work should be turned over to the Chinese Church and the further or most of the *pioneer* work for the Christianization of China in the immediate future become the major concern of the missionaries. Many missionaries and Chinese Christians find this idea attractive. At first sight it seems both desirable and feasable.

Feasable it may be! But is it desirable? What would be the effect on the Chinese Church, in the not distant future, of a ring of pioneer missionary work somewhat outside and around that carried on by itself? It would, in the first place, involve the continuance in the pioneer work of the evils of subsidization which all are now anxious to uproot from the established work. Eventually the Chinese Church would have to unsubsidize these new fields—just what it and the missionaries are now seeking to do for the older ones. Why repeat the earlier mistakes? Western Christians may and should help meet the vast needs of these unreached areas of territory and life but not as a *separate* responsibility.

The Chinese Church has not as yet developed either a passion or program for the Christianization of China commensurate with either the need or even its own responsibility and strength. Would such a missionary passion and program develop if it were generally recognized by Chinese Christians that the western Christians have, in the main, assumed both? Such a policy would only perpetuate indefinitely, in the second place, the doing of things *for* the Chinese Church instead of doing something *with* it!

A missionary passion and program are as essential to the spiritual vitality of the Chinese Church as for western churches. A ring of pioneer missionary work around the Chinese Church would tend to increase not decrease its self-centeredness and self-regard. Had not the clamant call of China's unreached areas and masses better wait until Chinese Christians feel and respond to the challenge? Dare we deny them this spiritual stimulus or carry this burden *for* them? We must not, even temporarily, build up a China-church-centric Christianity in China encircled by a western-church-centric Christianity. For the sake of the spiritual life of the Chinese Church some other way of meeting existing difficulties must be found. China needs not two Christian contingents working somewhat separately, but one with one passion and one program! Whatever western Christians do towards meeting these untouched needs they must do it *with* the Chinese Church. A long view of the future is necessary here if we would avoid repeating the mistakes of the past.

Again I have also heard missionaries urge that all existing institutional work should be turned over to China Christians and they be allowed to engage in evangelistic work only. This suggestion assumes the separation of missionaries, to some extent at least, from Christian institutional work. It seems also to assume that evangelism is something apart from institutional work. Both are mistaken assumptions. It is probably true that the problems connected with institutional work will be more intricate and difficult than those connected with purely evangelistic work. Are the missionaries, then, to share only the easier tasks in China? "Of course not!," they will say.

The main effect of such a policy, if adopted generally, would be to separate the missionaries from several important aspects of existing Christian work in China. Chinese Christian leaders want western Christian help in all types of tasks. The Jerusalem Conference of 1928 accepted the responsibility of Christians to promote every type of work which will build up a vital spiritual and social life. Evangelistic and institutional work belong together. The closest possible international fellowship is needed in all types of Christian work in China. Furthermore this policy does not involve an end to the evils of subsidization. It might decrease the purse-power of the missionary but it would be at the cost of restricting his spiritual sympathy, influence and usefulness. This is too big a price to pay! Why talk of setting the missionary apart in any sense?

Another suggestion sometimes made is somewhat in contrast to the previous one. It is that western Christian economic aid of Chinese churches should be discontinued as rapidly as possible and that western churches should assume the major or sole economic responsibility for schools and hospitals. It is argued that an effective Christian school

system is impossible in China if it depends on the economic strength of Chinese Christians. This is true! But it is also assumed that western money could be used in schools and hospitals without producing the debilitating effects evident in a similar use in the churches. In view of the fact that the same charge of pauperization is sometimes made against institutions as against churches this point seems to have little foundation. Furthermore it is urged that such subsidization of Christian schools is necessary in order to keep the fees down to the point where the Christian constituency can pay them. But if Christian schools are subsidized to the special advantage of Christians will not non-Christians be subjected to the economic lure in a way that may influence their attitude towards Christianity in an undesirable way? Such a solution, therefore, disposes of one difficulty only to create another as great.

But apart from the absence or presence of these debilitating effects in institutions what would be the effect upon the Chinese Church of thus relieving it of the major responsibility for educational and medical work? That is the real issue. It is true that the primary function of a church gathering is the nurture and expansion of the spiritual life *per se* It is also true that churches in the West are not always directly responsible for "Christian" schools and hospitals. Christians do, however, in the last analysis bear this responsibility. In China it will be true for a long time that Christian institutions will have to depend on *Christian funds*. In all probability unless the Chinese Church bears this responsibility it will go by the board. In any event Christian institutional work in China must maintain a close relationship with the Church in order that the Chinese Christians may have adequate ways of living up to their educational and medical responsibility.

Now one difficulty confronting Christian education in China is that, taken by and large, Chinese Christians have been in the past somewhat indifferent to it. At least that charge has often been made. Happily this attitude is changing. But would a proper sense of Chinese responsibility for Christian education have a fair chance for development if western Christians assumed its economic burdens as their special responsibility? Quite likely not! It would be another case of doing something for them instead of with them. It is as necessary for the spiritual vitality of the Chinese Church that it fit Christian education into the needs of its members and countrymen as that they get under the burden of the Church as such. Christian institutions must not on the one hand be commercialized nor must they on the other hand be pauperized. To find the golden mean in this situation is a challenge the Chinese Church must face. Of course it will be said, "But we propose to let them *control* the institutions into which we put our economic aid." Why not then, let them control the funds which it may be equally necessary to

put into direct church work? Chinese Christians need to learn how to use them in both cases.

All these schemes seem to be evasions of rather than solutions to the problem of the continuance of western Christian subsidization of Christian work in China. They all involve, also, some continued control by missionaries of the funds spent for the purpose for which they are responsible. This is the real issue! Can western Christian economic resources be used in China under the control of the Chinese Church or groups of Chinese Christians? I have already implied that the *use* of these funds must be subject to the Chinese Church. It only remains to add that unless western Christians can meet this condition they had better not help Christian work in China. For it is in the western *control* of Christian work in China that the major, if not all, difficulties in subsidization are rooted. It prevents the development of a Chinese Christian sense of responsibility. Under that system the missionaries are like teachers trying to inculcate something in their pupils that they will let them neither handle nor feel. The Chinese Church must enter into the school of actual responsibility. In the use of either their own or western economic resources they must learn by doing. There is no other way!

Why, also, is it assumed that *western* money has or must have a specially debilitating effect on the Chinese Church? Does this mean that Chinese church members can only be spiritual when other people's money is not involved? Then there are a lot of missionaries whose spiritual life must be below par! Does it mean that students and patients can stand the use of other people's money better than church members? This idea seems to land us nowhere. The fact is that if western Christians are to continue their economic aid of Christian work in China it is the Chinese Church that must above all other Christian institutions learn how to share the responsibility of using it. That is one of the *modern* challenges the Chinese Church must meet. They cannot avoid it unless western Christians withdraw. They must not evade it. For spiritual vitality never thrives on evasions! Western money in China does involve danger. Let us admit it. Its economic lure is heightened by the tensity of China's economic struggle. But it is an inevitable danger that Christians in China must face and overcome. If East and West are to work together they cannot detour around it. They must travel the road *together.*

It is, of course, often urged that Chinese Christians should undertake the support of the Church first and then go on to other interests. At first sight this seems reasonable. But other urgent interests are also pressing for attention. Increasing emphasis is being laid on Chinese churches reaching out into *community* activities. Such an expansion of church activity easily takes many churches—not all—where they

need help. It puts them up against the same economic problem as exists in the case of institutions.

This situation raises a pertinent question. What kind of a church is in the mind of those who claim that it ought and should rely only and always on its own resources? Is the Chinese Church to serve simply as a center where people meet and feed their own souls? Or is it to be a center from which radiates service to its community and its nation? Is Christian service in China to be the function of special institutions and the church selfishly concentrate on its own nurture? Or is service to be one form of nurture? Obviously much of what I have already said implies that nurture and service must go together. If the Chinese churches thus try to serve more than the needs of their own souls many of them will need help from the outside, either from stronger Chinese churches or from western Christians.

Of course where a church or an institution can carry all its own financial burdens it should. The fact, however, that in many cases this cannot be done without evading challenging opportunities is what creates the need for economic help. The relativity of the problem again obtrudes itself at this point. "No hard and fast distinction," says a previewer of these chapters, "can be drawn. In a given situation it is conceivable that the things that need to be done for a group of Christians is the very economic and personal aid that in another group would be disastrous." Which means that although western economic aid is still needed by the Chinese Church as a whole it does not follow that it should be indiscriminately urged upon all churches. In achieving this discrimination, however, the deciding factor *must be the church concerned* not the dispensors of the aid.

The two chief difficulties of these flank movements are first, that they do not eliminate the difficulties of western Christian subsidization of Christian work in China and second, that they involve separation at some point or other between the Chinese Church and western Christian workers in China. If western Christians are to assist the Chinese Church they must do it in the closest possible spiritual and practical intimacy with that Church. That is essential to fellowship and sympathy without which everything contributed from the West will fail of its chief aim. A vital Christianity in China must be built into a vital Christian international fellowship.

Fellowship in worship and realization of God must be the central fact in the service of God in China. Some religious systems think of religion as the doing of things *for God*; others as having God *do things for men*. The true religion is, in my mind, one step higher than either: it is one in which *all share the experience of God and do things together with God*. Both the first and second of these emphases in religion have been evident in the development of Christianity in China up to date.

Some western churches have thought in terms of doing things for the Chinese; others have thought in terms of getting the Chinese to do something for their denominations. The time has come when western Christians must plan to work *with* Chinese Christians in a common co-operation with God. Any scheme that weakens sympathy between Chinese and western Christians will militate against that spiritual intimacy which is essential to a dynamic and effective common effort with God in China.

CHAPTER VII.

CHANGING THE PRINCIPLES

WHAT are the principles on which this subsidization has formerly been built? What new ones are emerging? Some understanding of what is taking place in this connection is necessary in order to plan more effectively for the *long* future: for principles are needed that can be followed for a generation at least. At the risk of some reiteration, therefore, some of these principles will now be outlined.

The main aim of missionary effort has been that of opening the door for the Chinese to enter into a more vital and meaningful religious experience. This has undoubtedly been the principal aim of subsidization also. But the chief criticism of subsidization is that it has failed, to a great extent, to achieve this very aim. The mistake is made, moreover, of blaming this frustration of aim on subsidization as such rather than on the way or ways in which it has been carried on. That subsidization *may hinder* spiritual development is clear enough: but it does not follow that such frustration is inevitable. Too little attention has been paid to the main problem of how to develop the spiritual life as between two Christian groups living on different economic levels. To draw attention to that is the main purpose of this pamphlet.

In all seriousness a missionary recently said to me, "Of course, if we wish the Chinese Christians to work things our way we must expect to help them do it." This is the principle of *paternalistic philanthropy*. It assumes that the donors of funds must also be the directors of their use. It overlooks, however, the fact that in some cases Chinese Christians might find a better way to use the same money. It assumes, also, that the director of a particular enterprise must pay for it. But it is possible that the missionary might, with the full approval of Chinese Christians, be a guiding influence in Christian work whether his supporters share in its financial support or not. Unfortunately this paternalistic attitude does not help to break down the inhibitions against the development of individual responsibility and economic effort of Chinese Christians involved in past practices and policies.

Another principle often advanced is that those who provide the money have the *right to say how it should be used*. This principle is, fortunately, getting ready for the discard. One still hears it upheld sometimes, nevertheless. It is, of course, a perfectly legitimate commercial principle. It is based on the ethic of those who invest money to get more money; it is also an expression of the psychology of private property carried over into Christian service. But while it is a perfectly sound commercial principle it is something less than fitting for those who are together carrying on the Lord's work, which is now essentially

a service of sharing in a common purpose and task rather than one of controlling private property or funds or overseeing an investment based on purely commercial aims. This *commercialized subsidization* of Christian work in China does not conduce to sympathetic cooperation and induces too much subserviency on the part of the receivers for them to develop a vital sense of personal responsibility in connection therewith. Furthermore it magnifies overmuch the interests of the giver. It is, however, true that the sharing of economic resources rightly involves consideration of the views for its use of both the giver and receiver, even though they pass ultimately under the control of the latter.

The principle of *propagandic subsidization* has also been prominent. Now propaganda is, to some extent, legitimate. Whenever an individual or a group has a value they wish to pass on to others propaganda of some sort is inevitable. In the carrying out of such a purpose money may legitimately be used. To use money to make Christ known is, therefore, legitimate propaganda. To this extent every sincere advocate of a good cause is a propagandist also. This is the positive aspect of propaganda. Over against it must, however, be put the negative aspect, which has also been very prominent in Christian work in China. I refer, of course, to "denominational propaganda." A large proportion of the money western Christians have sent to China has been securely tied to very particular denominational aims and ideas. Full frequently in the West the appeal for missionary funds in certain denominations has been based on the necessity of setting up their particular denominational empire or making their own group and ideas supreme. Often their spiritual vitality, like that of the Chinese Church, has been tested by their response to appeals for economic support of denominational aims. This is, in essence, religious imperialism; the expansion of denominational influence and control; ecclesiastical, though not territorial, expansion. Like economic imperialists ardent denominational propagandists often claim the right to control the places or conditions under which they transfer their wares.

Many Christian schools have, for instance, made denominational propaganda their controlling feature rather than made education a factor in producing character founded on the principles of Christ: they have looked on their particular denominational ideas as essential to real Christian character. The Chinese understand the principle of education that aims at ethical living, but they do not appreciate that of denominational propaganda as an educational aim. Such propaganda is one element many of them are now trying to dissociate from education.

In this imperialist religious propaganda is found the chief difficulty connected with subsidization—control by the subsidizers. This control has run all through the Christian Movement. It is largely economic.

It is just such economic control that the revolution has now shot full of holes. Those who are thus controlled are, of course, apt to develop an acquiescent dependence. Indeed the two move together. Another problem, therefore, that western Christians desirous of sharing their economic surpluses with China must face is whether or not such assistance must involve control by the givers. This problem is not as robust as it once was. But it is still with us nevertheless. It is at precisely this point that the question arises of whether or not all such economic help should be in the form of *free gifts.*

Trusteeship is another principle vitally related to those given above. Western Christians have looked on themselves as trustees of the Christian faith, resources and program. For this reason they have often been reluctant to give up their purse-power. One is far from claiming that Christians anywhere should give of their money without regard to its use. They should always ascertain, on the contrary, what it is to be used for ere they give it. They may rightly choose whether or not they will aid any particular project. But that does not necessarily mean control of those who ask the help or determination in all details as to just how such help should be used when once granted.

Is there any way of meeting the legitimate obligation of trusteeship on the part of those who contribute so as to meet at the same time the *higher obligation* of a common task? The answer seems obvious. But it is usually overlooked nevertheless! The answer involves a new and more inclusive principle. What is it? To transfer the trusteeship of western churches and Christians to the whole Church throughout the world. That was not, of course, possible one hundred years ago. It is both possible and necessary now. The wealth and heritage of Christians throughout the world is really a *common trust.* The fact that western Christians are richer than their Chinese brethren is fortunate; but this greater degree of wealth does not necessarily root trusteeship for world-wide Christian service in them forever or indefinitely. The time demands a change! In place, therefore, of the idea of western Christian trusteeship we need the more inclusive one of world-wide Christian trusteeship. Ownership of Christian wealth is bunched up in the West. But the control of it when used for Christian purposes must not be rooted there. The concept of trusteeship must be enlarged. Christian wealth and trusteeship must be *internationalized.* Both must serve and accord with the emerging world-wide Christian fellowship. Between the different geographical Christian contingents Christian wealth and ideas must flow freely for the carrying on of a common task and for the meeting of a common obligation. So long as the difference of economic levels between these Christian contingents exists so long, indeed, will Christian economic resources flow from the higher to the lower levels. But this inevitable flow must be directed

so as to make it serve the world-wide Christian purpose and not that or those alone which arise in its source or sources.

To this must be added another principle-*sharing*. This is not new. I have already frequently referred to it. But it needs to be lifted out of the Christian's subconsciousness into his vivid consciousness. On it should be laid the chief emphasis in these days of readjustment. All Christians anywhere have, must be shared with other Christians everywhere. This is one of the primitive Christian principles that fits the modern situation. It is the dominating principle of primitive Christian "communism." Strange though it may sound, western Christians, when they have acted on this principle, have done so with the conviction that they themselves are most to be trusted to determine how the transfered part of their wealth and ideas is to be used. When there was no one else to trust that was natural. Yet even to-day some denominations only trust themselves when supporting Christian effort in other lands and, seen from the outside, seem to forget largely both God and their fellows. *The time has, therefore, come to discard the term "subsidization" and substitute therefor the term "sharing."* Subsidization has, among other things, suggested that those subsidized are on a lower level than those carrying it on. As a result the recipients thereof have often built up a defence-reaction that has inhibited free fellowship. The idea of sharing carries with it no such unfortunate implication. Sharing for a common purpose is something in which spiritual equals may engage.

This western self-trust is one aspect of the old habit of subsidization that must go. It will go when they and their world-wide Christian colleagues learn the lesson that the use of their wealth and ideas is a matter of common trusteeship rooted in a common trust in and obligation to God. "Trust God but keep your hand on the purse-strings," might well have served as a motto for many western Christians in their support of missionary work under the conditions of yesterday. One feels like asking, however, "Can God be trusted to guide Chinese Christians in their use of western economic help?" It should, indeed, be as easy to trust Him to guide the Chinese in their use of western money as it is to trust Him to save their souls. But is it? Yet learning to trust God to guide Christians in the use of economic resources is as necessary as calling on them to trust Him with their eternal welfare. The keystone of Christian trusteeship is a common trust in God!

"But what," it will be asked, "would you do with those Chinese churches or group which are not yet fitted to administer trust funds?" That is a fair question. Undoubtedly there are such groups whose experience has not yet fitted them to administer economic resources other than their own, and perhaps not even these. They must, however, begin at some point. This is not, as a matter of fact, a particularly difficult question to answer. Neither does it provide an excuse against a very

wide application of the principle. To put such groups under other *Chinese* groups will meet the essential difficulty. Yet we must not forget that even such "backward" groups must actually experience trusteeship to some extent ere they can learn to rise to it.

The sharing or giving of economic resources to Christian work has been looked on as having a vital relation to an individual's spiritual vitalization. It has! One who takes all he can get and gives out nothing or as little as possible, always shrinks his soul. Economic resources have been looked on, as we have seen, as a means to a propagandic end. This had its place. The appeal to the sacrifice of private property is a good one for the West. It is weak in China. But there is still another value in economic resource. That is their *use-value*. This is often overlooked. Their use can be shared in a way to minister to the spiritual life of both the giver and the receiver. Up till now Chinese Christians have watched the missionary use these resources for them. But now they need to learn more generally how to use them themselves.

Can one, however, achieve a spiritual experience different or higher in the use of economic resources they have themselves *earned* than in the *use* of those which others share with them? This may seem like an academic question. But it is not! It amounts to this, is one's spiritual vitality greater when meeting responsibility in the use of one's own funds or when using funds coming from others, whether Chinese or westerners? If spiritual vitality were necessarily greater when developed through the use of one's own funds then board secretaries and missionaries would perforce achieve a low spiritual vitality only and big givers be stronger spiritually than those giving perforce little or nothing. No one believes that! Personal giving does call for sacrifice. But equality in economic sacrifice is not the only essential of equality in spiritual vitality. This involves also responsibility to one's self, the givers and God in the use of funds not personally earned.

Responsibility for the *use* of the funds supplied by others may, therefore, develop an equally keen sense of trusteeship and perhaps an even keener sense of responsibility. For one may feel freer in the spending of one's own money than that of others. The fact is that spiritual vitality is as closely connected with the *use value* of funds as with their *self-earned value*. This use-value of Christian economic resources has received little attention in current discussions of their relation to spiritual vitality even though it is the main factor in the relation of missionaries thereto. When such use is controlled from the outside it produces dependence: but when controlled by the users it stimulates responsibility unless they are dead to all high aims and influences.

After all, to slip into an academic mood, nothing Christians have is strictly their own. It all belongs to God. Their spiritual life grows

throw the proper *use* of what is given them. That same principle holds in the case of economic aid coming from the West to the Chinese Church. The old habit of subsidization has unfortunately deprived many Chinese Christians of the chance to develop their spiritual life by the use-value of funds so supplied. The new habit of sharing should provide this chance.

The development of the spiritual life of Chinese Christians through the use of economic resources other than their own is, therefore, another principle which must needs be made more prominent in the future, with regard to the spiritual life of the Chinese Church, than it has been in the past. But this is not possible unless the users are *directly responsible*. Is, therefore, the development of a personal sense of responsibility the prime factor in spiritual vitality?

CHAPTER VIII.

INDEPENDENCE OR INTERDEPENDENCE?

IT is now necessary to face squarely a root issue involved in previous articles. This is found in the assumption that if western Christians are to continue to cooperate economically with the Chinese Church a certain degree or kind of economic dependence of that Church is inevitable at some points and in some cases in connection with this economic sharing. This assumption, and the points given below in analyzing it, have brought this chapter under more severe criticism by the previewers of this pamphlet than that made of any other chapter therein. It must nevertheless take its place by the side of the others. What has heretofore been treated as an assumption must now be treated as a *fact* in the situation and not a theory about it. This necessary degree of economic dependence must be so viewed and managed that it will vitalize and not vitiate the spiritual life of either cooperator. That is a primary necessity! It must, therefore, be frankly faced. The real issue may be thus stated, Does or need economic sharing induce a spiritually devitalizing degree or kind of dependence? The usual assumption is in the affirmative. To suggest a negative answer is, therefore, the purpose of this chapter even though it also involves a certain amount of reiteration of things already said.

Now we are frequently told that the Chinese churches should and must attain complete self-support. That statement assumes that as completely self-supporting churches they would not need to share western economic resources. This complete self-support is admitted to be practically impossible for an indefinite time in view of the rising economic standards in all aspects of China's life. Furthermore, so long as the Chinese Church as a whole works with and shares the resources of its economically stronger brethren self-support, as thus envisaged, is not attained. Now this complete self-support or economic self-reliance is essential to spiritual vitality when possible but not necessarily so when impossible. That, at least, is my contention. That being so I wish to show that a measure of necessary economic dependence is not inevitably inimical to spiritual vitality.

It is obvious that each Christian individual and group must *use to the full their own economic and spiritual strength* ere their spiritual life can be vital. Unused muscles always grow flabby. It is equally obvious that many western and Chinese Christians have a flabby spirituality because they are too parsimonious. Whether, however, that tendency is more apparent in Chinese than western churches I shall not attempt to decide: for economically the two are not comparable. The fact is that many of the problems of subsidization and support of Christian work

arise in universal human frailties. These are neither racial nor geographical.

We need to keep constantly in mind the difference between *self-help* and self-support. *Self-help* to the limit of the strength of an individual or a group *is absolutely essential* to spiritual vitality. No person or group can be spiritually vital that permits others to do for them what they could do for themselves. There is no doubt many Chinese churches have acquired this debilitating habit. Self-help, however, may not always win to self-support. It is precisely at this point that continued western economic aid comes in. It is not true in China, moreover, as is sometimes asserted, that churches which are established on subsidizing methods never win to self-support. Many of them have!

What, then, is the real relation of a measure of economic dependence to spiritual vitality? After considerable thought on the problem I have come to the conclusion that putting forth one's own maximum economic effort—self-help—and economic independence—self-support—do not necessarily go together though they are often confused with one another. A measure of economic dependence is quite compatible with spiritual vitality. I have had to change my mind in this regard because a few obvious, but frequently overlooked facts, have been forced into it. These facts are not statistical but observational: they are, indeed, mainly psychological; they are matters of common experience: they belong to both the practise and fruits of the sharing of economic resources. In any fair consideration of the problem under discussion they must be noted.

Children and adolescents are usually economically dependent. But is that taken to mean that a vital religious experience is impossible for them before they attain economic independence? By no means! In fact while it is recognized that an adolescent's religious experience is different from that of an adult, as indeed that of any particular adult is usually different from that of all others, the appeal to youth to follow Christ is based on the assumption that a vital religious experience is *possible* for all whatever their age or economic status, even though only few actually attain it. This failure in attainment is not, however, charged up to their economic dependence. The vitality of their religious experience is thus not made dependent on their economic self-reliance though it is expected to stimulate them to put forth their maximum effort to meet, so far as they can, their economic as well as their social and ethical obligations.

The former dependent status of women in the West is not an altogether happy illustration of the same situation. Nevertheless women have been largely dependent on the male members of their family in the sense that the men earned the money which supported the family. Inasmuch as women do their share in administering the home they do,

of course, help to support it. The money earned by the husband is or should be, therefore, a joint possession. Nevertheless women in families are users rather than earners of these family funds. Yet I never heard even the most ardent advocates of their independence—which advocacy is by the way rooted mainly in their economic relationship—claim that they could not have a vital religious experience while thus not personally earning the economic resources on which they depend. In fact, whatever the effect or undesirability of their former dependent status, both of which still call for improvement, women have played a large part in the life of the Church in the West and are actually in the majority in mission work in China, single women workers therein being economically independent. In any event the chance of women to attain spiritual experience is not made dependent on their economic status! Western Christians are, in fact, rather fond of claiming that the vital religious experience of women, often gained of course while thus dependent, has been a major factor in helping them win social and economic independence. That claim, though perhaps debatable, shows that their spiritual vitality is not looked on as necessarily rooted in their economic independence.

So far as students in a country like the United States are concerned they are also, educationally speaking, to a certain degree dependents. Even when tuition is required the students rarely earn or pay it themselves. The public school system even provides their text-books. It has long been the custom for the churches also to support theological students, though the wisdom of this has been debated: there is a tendency in China, also, to make Chinese theological students bear the expenses of their education to a degree not heretofore required in the United States.

Conclusive evidence as to the effect of these educational practices on character is not available. Yet such leadership as the churches and the nation have is the product of an educational system which makes the students to no small degree economically dependent during their years of training. The fact is that while students often assist in paying for their education or their needs while in school, thus exemplifing the principle of self-help, they could not possibly bear all the expense involved. To acquire an education under modern conditions they must accept assistance provided by others. To some extent this is true of church life where, while all members are expected to help according to their ability, the major part of the expense is borne by the well-to-do who sometimes also do the major part in providing the church building. It is, however, true that in the West church work is more dependent on the contributions of its members than schools on the fees of the students.

I have never heard it claimed that such an educational system necessarily vitiates spiritual vitality. On the contrary the lack of vital

religious experience in students in usually attributed to some lack in their training or some adverse element in their teachers, never to the necessary measure of dependence through which they acquire their education. An educational system built up on the principle that absolute economic independence is essential to the spiritual vitality or the character of the students would be something so different from what exists that one cannot envisage it. It is, on the contrary, actually expected that vitality of religious experience can be achieved in a system in which the students are helped economically. Much money, also, is often invested in education which is not controlled by the investors. Yet some claim that if the Chinese are to control their schools and churches they must also pay for them!

Take, also, the missionaries! It is assumed that generally speaking they both know what spiritual vitality is and enjoy it. Certainly they tend to test the vitality of the religious experience of the Chinese Church and Christians by their own. As a group they are dispensors, users and, in the past controllers, of money other people have earned. Both they and the boards backing them are thus dependent on Christian contributors. Missionaries *earn* their *salaries*, of course, but the money they use for their work places them, with rare exceptions, in a position of dependence on others. They are precisely in the same position as a Chinese leader who uses funds from the West—a fact sometimes overlooked! Both together are *dependent users* of other people's money. Does this degree of missionary dependence on others necessarily vitiate their spiritual life? I never heard a missionary admit it! The proper development of the responsibility involved in this economic dependence is looked on as a factor in promoting their spiritual life. Why could not the same thing be true of Chinese churches and Christians unable, like their missionary colleagues, to earn all the funds they need for their work?

The National Christian Council is practically controlled by Chinese; yet is it largely dependent on western economic aid. Has that fact prevented it from taking vital positions on some current problems Certainly not! For the Chinese Church to support it more or altogether would quicken its interest therein and bind it closer to those it aims to serve. But would that necessarily mean that its Chinese leadership would have a more vital religious experience? I question it.

All this leads to another obvious fact which has often been overlooked. I refer to the emergence of a vital Chinese Christian leadership which is one of the *fruits of the period of subsidization.*

Two things explain why the Chinese Church has not, as yet, developed that adequate passion or program for the evangelization of China already mentioned. It has, in the first place, been concentrating its attention on getting a foothold: it has been engaged in learning to

live. Then, in the second place, programs for the expansion of Christianity have come so fast from missionaries, missions and boards that the Chinese Church has been kept busy working on *imported plans.* Personally I am convinced that no program for the further evangelization of the unreached regions of China should be considered until Chinese leadership initiates it! That is not, of course, the same thing as saying they should carry it economically alone even though they take the lead in creating it. But it will not be a program vital to them and China until they do lead in its creation! Neither will its vitality and meaning necessarily be vitiated if they ask and receive western Christian aid in putting it over.

The point I wish to emphasize, however, is that an era of subsidization has not failed to produce a vital Chinese leadership. For it is generally agreed that there is a body—inadequate it is true!—of vital and aggressive Chinese Christian leaders. It is also agreed that they have a vital religious experience of their own. Evangelistic work in 1927 was, for instance, when carried on done by Chinese Christians. This leadership has been created out of or in spite of a system of heavy subsidization. Those centers recording experiments which aim at eliminating or reducing subsidization to a minimum showed little or no particular success in this regard. The Chinese Home Missionary Society is one aspect of this Chinese Christian agressiveness. Christian schools have been charged with denationalizing and devitalizing their students. *Some* certainly believe this anyway! Nevertheless these students have taken part in nationalistic leadership. It is also true that some of them show signs of a vital religious experience. It is equally true that, proportionately speaking, student response to the Christian appeal has been greater in the past than that in the nation at large.

From every direction have come instances of how Chinese Christians have gotten under the burdens created by the revolutionary attacks and the departure of the missionaries. It looks as though all that was needed, in many cases, was a chance for leadership to lead. Yet most, if not all, such leaders have come out of a period of subsidization. Their ready assumption of responsibility and deepening of religious experience revealed the fact that while subsidization may have kept their capacities for leadership to some extent latent it had not destroyed them.

The recent deepening of the religious experience of Chinese Christians has little to do with their experience under a subsidizing system. It is due to the fact that they met a vital challenge that called out their religious faith in a new way! That is a point that needs to be kept in mind. Their spiritual vitality is the fruit of something apart from the system under which they have lived and in which most of them have been trained. When under the strains of the last year or so Chinese Christians undertook responsibilities for educational, medical or church

work they did it sometimes with funds contributed from the West and sometimes without. Were Chinese Christians deprived of western economic assistance they would, I believe, carry on Christian work somehow. But that does not mean that they could not do more and do it better if still assisted.

One fact about recent events stands out. In many cases Chinese Christians sacrificed economically when forced into spiritual and physical sacrifice. But their spiritual sacrifice was the *seed not the fruit* of their economic sacrifice. Their deepened spiritual vitality made economic sacrifice natural and easy. It was, however, something other than mere economic dependence or independence which deepened their spiritual life and heightened its vitality. That fact must also be kept in mind.

Connected with the assumption that economic independence is essential to a dynamic spiritual life is the reliance on the rise and fall of the economic mercury and statistics as determinants of the spiritual life of the Chinese Church. This is to use material things as tests of spiritual realities. Both are important. Neither should or can be ignored. But the spiritual temperature does not necessarily rise or fall with either. Persecution has given Chinese Christians spiritual grip and warmth. Those who have thus suffered for their faith have experienced an uprush of vitality not rooted in economic considerations. There is, indeed, little to show that in the day of their fiery test their experience under a system of subsidization either helped or hindered them.

It may also be noted, as bearing on the general problem, that during his ministry neither Christ nor his disciples were, strictly speaking, economically self-reliant in the sense that they were all and always dependent only on what they earned themselves. For them a measure of economic dependence or interdependence did not debilitate their spiritual vitality.

To the above may be added a bit of Christian philosophy. Chauvinistic nationalism does not conduce to constructive patriotism. Likewise isolated independence does not necessarily produce spiritual or vital religious experience. The Christian faith is essentially an interdependent relationship. A true Christian does not assert loudly his independence of other Christians. For that reason an hypernationalistic and self-centered Chinese Church would be less than truly Christian. Overemphasis on economic self-reliance tends in this direction. Christian love, like the ethical love of which the Chinese philosopher Chu-hsi speaks, is centrifugal. It is self-imparting. This involves mutual sharing as well as economic self-help!

We need to give the primary emphasis to another Christian principle—*interdependence*. This fits in with and necessitates economic self-help, but does not involve that economic isolation or separation which overemphasis on an unattainable degree of self-support does. *Inter-*

dependence must, therefore, be coupled with spiritual independence. For the Chinese Church to decline to use what others have and so pass by its opportunities of service to China as a result thereof would be to indulge in an egoistic independence. For the western churches to decline to share their economic strength with Chinese churches would be to indulge in specious complacency. Both are dependent upon each other and both depend upon God. Chinese and western churches need the experience and resources of each other. The fact that western churches are richer gives them no right to dictate how the Lord's resources shall be used. The fact that Chinese churches are poorer gives them no right to refuse to use what others can share with them in their common task and to realize their common purpose.

I do not want to be misunderstood. I am not advocating the coddling or pauperizing of Chinese churches. Nevertheless I think that western churches have thought too much in terms of their economic resources and too little of the problem of promoting a vital spiritual life in China. One can share his strength and resources with another without either pauperizing or pampering him. To learn how to use economic resources so as to avoid these is one of the problems both Chinese and western Christians must solve together. A measure of economic dependence is consonant with spiritual and economic interdependence. Of that I am convinced.

We may fairly conclude from our brief review of certain usually overlooked facts that western Christians have, in the case of the Chinese Church and Christians, tended to give much more prominence to economic self-reliance as the primary factor in spiritual vitality than in their own practice they actually accord it. Economic values have had too much leverage in their relation to and attitude towards the Chinese Church. There is too much talk about money!

Economic values bear to the Chinese Christian life the same relation as a train to a passenger. Both are essential to getting somewhere. But neither determines the vitality of either the Christian or the passenger. The physical health of a passenger bears little relation to the train in which he rides. Economic values likewise bear a quite subordinate relation to the spiritual vitality of the Christian. What then is spiritual vitality? To that subject we shall next turn our attention.

CHAPTER IX.

SPIRITUAL VITALITY.

WHEN and how is a Christian's religious experience *vital?* Evidently wealth is not essential to spiritual vitality though by their practice, missionaries and boards strengthen the quite proper impression that one's economic level may be so low as to adversely affect it. This forces on us again the (as yet unanswered) question, How far is the spiritual vitality of Chinese Christians affected by their low economic level? It is an important factor though little or no data are available for its elucidation. Spiritual age, furthermore, is not the fundamental factor in spiritual vitality though it is true, that the fuller experience of an adult—whether church or individual—should make the particular religious outlook more meaningful than that of an adolescent in either case. Neither is spiritual vitality the special prerogative of the best-learned: though, on the other hand, the ignorance which is usually one of the depressants of a low economic level, does inhibit tremendously its proper development. Furthermore, economic self-reliance is not its primary essential, as I have already frequently stated.

Spiritual vitality correlates, it is true, somewhat with the vitality of the personality concerned, which may be heightened or lowered in accordance with the economic or intellectual level. This vitality of inherent personality explains in part the emergence of a Chinese Christian leadership in a time of persecution and in spite of the inhibiting influences of subsidization. There are plenty of instances of Chinese Christian leaders who have refused a salary offering comparative affluence and accepted one much lower. To this extent Chinese Christian leaders *have made* economic sacrifice. But there seems to be little evidence to show that they could make the more drastic sacrifice *of living* always on the economic level of those they serve without deleterious effects upon their life and work.

This inherent vitality of the personality is also at one and the same time an explanation of the aspiration for economic self-help as well as of spiritual vitality. Yet many vital personalities are far from being astounding successes as pilers up of economic resources! Most missionaries, for instance, do not come from the ranks of the wealthy. Some of them can successfully raise money but what success they would have as a group, if dependent entirely on their own exertions, cannot wisely be stated. To this extent, at least, economic self-reliance and earning capacity do not feed into the missionary enterprise. The men and women who *use* the Church's resources are not the same, in most cases, as those who *earn* them. This proves the point, already made, that spiritual vitality may be present in both those who earn economic resources and

those who use them; both *earner* and *user* may be equally vital spiritually. Otherwise the most successful earner would be the most vital spiritually. This conclusion is not generally accepted.

In the last analysis, then, spiritual vitality is rooted in something other than money, propaganda or organization. Its Christian root is *personal response* to God in Christ, though this is often affected by social and sometimes by economic considerations, to the extent of the adverse influence of which, it is unsatisfactory. Economic resources come sometimes by accident; mostly by hard effort. But a vital religious life only begins and grows if and as one responds personally to the call of God in Christ. Has subsidization, as heretofore *managed*, hindered the freedom of this response? I think it has. The economic influence of the missionary and the emphasis on denominational peculiarities, both of which have accompanied it, have all too often focused spiritual attention on the less important things. The war over the creeds has, when known to a seeker, often blurred his vision of Christ.

All too often a particular type of response was urged as essential; propagandic effort was centered on transmitting a particular individual's or group's experience instead of creating the conditions for the *birth of a new one*. In the response of a soul to God there is something which is both mysterious and individual at one and the same time. But in all too many cases missionaries have thought that those who subsidized the opportunity to respond to Christ could also set the form of this response and even touch it off! But there is no one type of human response to God as there is no one type of soul! This response must be personal to be vital though it must express itself in fellowship and social effort. It has, if real, little to do with the economic terms on which the opportunity is given to make it. All subsidizers and genuine propagandists can do is to tell people that a search for God explains their own life and then show a life to back it up. This may result in a desire in another to make the search for himself: it cannot reproduce exactly the experience of the subsidization-propagandist or even that of the altrustic sharer.

How can one know, then, when this personal response has been made? A large proportion of Chinese Christians have been tested at this point by their economic efforts and their ability to repeat certain creeds, texts or theological concepts. To put these first, however, is like proffering the branches of the peach tree in place of the peaches. The only real proof that this response has been made is the presence of a dynamic urge to moral, social and spiritual effort in the life of the one who claims to have made it. This may often, at first, be relatively weak. But, weak or strong, what should it mean? Should it eventuate in the respondee being able to stride just like the Baptists, the Methodists or the Anglicans? The trouble is, it often does seem to mean just that!

It should, in contrast, mean living the way of Christ! Such living is not found in the mastery of creeds or theologies alone or especially. *It is a way of followship of Christ and fellowship with Him and all Christians.* It involves the continuance of the search that is only begun when the personal response is made: a search that may be long and difficult.

This search involves, however, a number of things in which *practice* should begin at once. The Christian should shoulder personal responsibility. He should seek to induce others to make the same search as himself. He should be willing to cooperate with others in this search. We may here again ask, Why has the Chinese Church, in the large, not as yet developed either an adequate passion or program for the evangelization of China? To the reasons already given may be added another. With the system of subsidization has gone a tremendous emphasis on *individual* salvation. Too many have, therefore, thought their religious search ended when they themselves are saved or think they are, or are told by others that they are.

Missionaries have worried over the self-centered or self-regarding life of many Chinese churches. They and others have blamed it on subsidization. It is really much more due to people trying to do just and only what they were told. It is, for instance, surprising how many of the hymns and prayers heard in Christian services have to do with individual salvation or satisfaction. Such do not hold up sufficiently the Christians' obligation to serve others as well as satisfy themselves.

Finally this dynamic urge in an individual life should lead into fellowship with all other Christians. But here appears another of the evils of subsidization. This has been utilized in too many cases to induce people to believe that an *exclusive communion* is the best or only way of salvation. Such subsidization can never do aught but harm! Christians everywhere should feel free to share their experience of Christ and God with any Christians anywhere in any church! Likewise they should share with one another their burdens, their tasks and their resources. That principle again precludes the possibility of western Christians sharing their spiritual experience with Chinese Christians unless they at the same time also share their burdens and all both own.

It is this kind of a vital experience that we expect the economic dependents of varying degrees, as mentioned in the previous chapter, to have. Likewise we expect the economically strong to exhibit it also. Those who use their brother's resources in Christian service can have it as well as those who earn them or rely only on their own. If they cannot, then multitudes of Christian people are told to seek a spiritual vitality they cannot have. That, if true, would be mockery! But it is not true!

Spiritual vitality can only grow in a fitting soil. Western Christians have helped prepare the soil in China. But they cannot vitalize the seed or provide a substitute for the sun and rain of divine forces. Their economic resources are like fertilizers. The Chinese soil needs this economic fertilizer. But too much of it is almost as bad as none. Knowledge of the soil is essential to the effective use of a fertilizer. For in the last analysis the soil creates its own conditions. Its lack of certain elements is one; other elements are found within it that must be noted and utilized.

What are, then, the indispensable conditions for spiritual vitality which *must* be met? These are in general three. First, autonomy; second, responsibility; third, comprehension. These three conditions are indispensable to the spiritual vitality and creativeness of any individual or group, whatever their economic strength or status.

Spiritual vitality and creativeness are impossible without *self-direction,* the keynote of autonomy. Even with it, spiritual vitality does not always emerge; other things may militate against it. But no soul is spiritually alert that does not direct its own response to God. That does not, of course, preclude instruction in spiritual things. Neither need it prevent denominations or groups from presenting their own creeds or theologies.

Self-direction only operates in these connections when the respondee is allowed to exercise his own power of choice. Working up to a choice takes time. It is, therefore, evident that economic help must not involve with its acceptance the *necessary* adoption of creeds or theologies. That it often has and still does is one of the ways whereby subsidization does harm. For it thus—usually unconsciously—exploits economic need in the interest of a certain spiritual choice. If subsidization inevitably means this it ought to stop at once! True Christians cannot be made that way!

Self-expression also is essential to self-direction. Imitation has its place. But a spiritual experience built up exclusively on imitation can never be more than automatic! One great trouble with Christianity in China is that too many Christians are simply automatons! Missionaries object to the old feature of Chinese education whereby the students studied phrases with a view mainly to turning their back on the book and repeating, usually without understanding, its sounds and words. Religious instruction is necessary. But unfortunately much of the religious instruction given in the past follows this old Chinese method. I know! I used to indulge in it!

No experience is vital until one is able to express it or respond to it in his own way. This means that until one has thought it, or some aspect of it, through for himself it means little or nothing to him. In other words a vital religious experience *must have a creative movement*

in it, be that movement great or small. Take, for instance, Christian worship in China. It has been mainly imitative! The subsidizers have thought that leading the Chinese to worship God means worshipping Him as westerners do. Little attempt has been made, until quite recently, to lead the Chinese to find out how they want or need to worship God. That is another aspect of subsidization that *must* go! One difficulty is that the subsidizers do not agree as to how this worship should be carried on, with the result that on each stream of subsidization floats a particular type of worship-boat. Why should this be? It tends to make economic influence a determining factor in worship. For that there is no excuse!

The development of the sense and meeting of responsibility comes only with the *actual bearing of responsibility*. Western churches cannot transmit their sense and modes of responsibility to China. Unfortunately with their subsidizing liberality has also gone, in many cases, the over-ready assumption of responsibility. How can Chinese Christians develop a sense of economic responsibility? Only by being actually responsible for the economic resources, including property, of their church or the Christian work connected therewith. Is it necessary that the source of the economic resources be rooted always in those bearing responsibility for its use? If it is, then missionaries and executives of great commercial organizations are all in a sorry fix!

Right here emerges one commercial principle that might well be more definitely incorporated into Christian work in China. Both missionaries and commercial executives are given responsibility for the use of economic resources they do not directly earn or own. Without this principle little organizational effort of any kind could go on. Likewise western Christians must learn to share their economic resources with Chinese Christians and allow them to use it to build up Christian work and experience. This lesson Chinese Christians have not, in general, been taught. I have noted that when talking about the use of funds for which missionaries are responsible, Chinese Christians sometimes tend to radical and even reckless statements. But I have noticed, also, that as soon as they actually feel the weight of real responsibility for them, their easy talking usually dies down and cautiousness appears.

Wheat will not grow until seed is put in the ground. Responsibility will not develop until it is actually felt upon the shoulders and in the heart. Of course even then mistakes may be made. But since when did God give the prerogative of making mistakes in the use of things economic to western Christians?

All the above is summed up in this working principle, that Chinese Christians must be allowed to *grow spiritually in their own way*. China is often charged with looking backward to standardized social and religious ideals. One difficulty with religion as imported from the West

is a similar tendency to standardization which is none the less rigid because it is still young. Observation leads me to feel that while Protestantism is presented as primarily a scheme for individual regeneration and experience, its psychology is much more institutional than is generally recognized. The strength of subsidization as heretofore practised is rooted in this institutionalism. Sharing tends to root itself more in spiritual equality. That is another argument in favor of adopting its psychology and method. Perhaps, for instance, Chinese Christians will want to grow through the religious use of the intelligence rather than through the mystical approach. Personally I think they have about as much mysticism in their make-up as their western friends. They are, however, often credited with actually being somewhat more practical. In any event they must develop their own religious experience. It will be no use to them or the world unless they do! I see no reason why this cannot be done even if western Christians continue to share their economic resources with them. But if those who give them money and missionaries must also tell them how to grow spiritually then they had better keep both their money and their missionaries!

Here emerges one guiding principle for the future economic relationships of Chinese and western Christians. In some way the economic resources of western Christians if shared with the Chinese Church must be on the basis of the *intrinsic right and responsibility of Chinese Christians to use such economic resources* to build up their religious and institutional life in their own way. Just what this ultimately means both Chinese and western Churches must needs study together. It involves the problem of endowments for the churches. Endowments for schools and hospitals are regularly a part of western Christian practise. On endowments for churches, however, they look askance. The Chinese Christians must learn by experience at this point. To study the whole problem is one pressing challenge to both the Christian spirit and the scientific mind. It is at this point that the third main condition of spiritual vitality becomes evident.

Autonomy and responsibility necessitate *understanding* or comprehension on the part of Chinese churches of the funds they are to use and the tasks they are to direct and for both of which they ought to bear the responsbility. Heretofore programs for Christian work in China have come mainly out of western Christian minds. To study what programs are called for either in the use of their own or western resources will bring to Chinese Christians an understanding of the responsibilities which belong to autonomy. Chinese churches might delve into this problem with or without the presence of their western colleagues. But they must delve into it. *They* must find out what they want or ought to do and how to use such resources as are available no matter what their source. For Chinese churches thus to study their future programs will take time.

In view of the vast needs of China, western Christians might be troubled again with that spiritual impatience which in part accounts for the rapid growth of subsidization in the past. But this impatience must be curbed! It is essential to the spiritual virility of the Chinese Christians that they come to grips with their own responsibilities. The Christianization of China is, in the main, their task. To comprehend it is both their duty and a spiritual necessity.

A few other necessary and significant aspects of the use of their own and western economic resources may be noted here. Chinese Christians may want to make the church more pedagogical and less homiletical in its main features. Or they may want to *separate* worship from the teaching function of the Church. Why not? To make the Church more of a school and less of a preaching hall, or to separate the two, may meet their needs better. They want rural preachers or workers who can help the farmer get more out of his fields as well as feed more into his soul. Again why not? After all, religious experience does not come easily to those whose souls are numbed by reason of the grilling toil of barely making ends meet. That fact shows that one's economic level does have a bearing on his spiritual vitality. I note, too, that most of the Chinese Christian leaders who are doing things in a vital way have risen to a higher economic level than most of their countrymen! The two things cannot be disconnected! Some economic security seems essential to spiritual vitality. To help them achieve both is one way whereby western Christians may help Chinese Christians bear their burdens.

Must Chinese Christians have a creed? Some say "Yes" others "No." Suppose they want to make the first and major article of that creed free fellowship? What if they wish to take their freedom of relationships between their own religious systems and sublimate it into a free fellowship in the spirit of and loyalty to Christ? Why must they imitate the ecclesiastical exclusionism of the West because they share its economic surplus or its sacrificial gifts? They may desire also to expand their Christian fellowship more through personal relationships than propaganda. When left alone they seem hesitant about *urging* others to a religious decision. They seem to feel that a dynamic faith embodied in a personality is self-operative. They should be allowed to try it out.

In short if they feel the need of western Christian economic help they should be allowed to use it as they wish. When they have achieved spiritual independence and made their own response to God they will not fail to develop economic effort to the limit of their strength. For Christian economic effort, as I have noted, is a fruit of spiritual vitality. When Chinese Christians face and meet their responsibility they have spiritual vitality. Anything that will help them meet it is justifiable; anything that hinders it unjustifiable.

CHAPTER X.

PRACTICAL IDEALISM.

ONE difficulty with the problem of the spiritual vitality of the Chinese Church is, then, the tendency to decide that it is impossible for this to be realized apart from economic self-reliance, which means that Chinese Churches must rely only on funds earned by Chinese. A conflicting difficulty is that the continuance of western economic help is also deemed necessary and inevitable. We have thus, as a matter of fact, been talking about financial self-reliance as essential to spiritual vitality and at one and the same time declaring it indefinitely *unattainable*. Thus we are, on the one hand, constantly urging Chinese Christians to become spiritually vital and, on the other hand, telling them it cannot be done under this unavoidable situation! That is a thoroughly impractical idealism!

We need a practical idealism that will give an answer *now* to this question, How can the Chinese Church develop its spiritual vitality and continue to use western Christian money? I shall, therefore, end this pamphlet on an intricate subject with reference to a few aspects of practical idealism which will amount, in the main, to a summary of what has been said and implied in previous chapters.

We must begin by abandoning the superficial notion that economic self-reliance is *always* essential to spiritual vitality. Western and Chinese Christians are together caught in the whirlpool created by the impact of higher western economic standards and momentum upon the lower economic standards and strength of China. It is under these conditions that the spiritual vitality of the Chinese Church must be built up. Even if the missionaries were to lower their standards of living—which I do not advocate, though they might perhaps, in some cases, trim them as regards size and furnishing of residences—to fit those prevailing among those whom they serve and with whom they work, they would not thereby eliminate the economic conflict inherent in the impact of western upon Chinese life. After all is said, this problem, like that of western Christian economic help of the Chinese Church, is a relative one that varies with local conditions and national standards. Taken as a whole, there is no prospect that the missionaries' standards of living will be lowered to the present average standard of most of those whom they serve. The economic influence of the missionaries is bound, therefore, to remain in considerable measure. Since they cannot eliminate it they must, as I have shown, help to remove the conditions in China which create the conflict involved. They must set up a *new ethic* for the sharing of western economic resources with the Chinese Church!

Christ was international in his outlook. Christianity must likewise be international. But Christianity cannot be truly international if western Christians do not share all they have with Oriental Christians, and vice versa. The logical outcome of insistence on the absolute economic self-reliance of the Chinese Church is the economic isolation of Chinese and western churches from each other. I confess I can neither envisage what that would mean nor its feasibility. It would create a situation so utterly different from anything that has ever existed in Christian relationships that the idea becomes almost fantastic! Why, then, any longer talk in terms that involve it?

Chinese and western Christians must find out how to develop spiritual vitality in the midst of the actual necessities created by the impact of differing economic levels. This is a *modern* problem: it calls for a modern solution It is under these conditions that we *must seek* and *work for* the *immediate* vitalization of the spirit of the Chinese Church. Chinese Christians cannot render an *adequate* service to China without western money: western Christians cannot work with them if they withhold it. We must find out how to make a church vitality spiritual that cannot be, taken as a whole, economically self-reliant. This is the task! It calls for reverent research and an adventurous faith!

We have seen that there is little or no proof that the presence or absence of western money is the primary factor in the development of a vital Christian faith in China. New experiments are called for which will, on the one hand, definitely recognize that the sharing of western economic resources with the Chinese Church is necessary and, on the other hand, be based on the assumption that the spiritual vitality of the Church *is possible* under the conditions which actually exist. An economically dependent church is not necessarily weak spiritually; neither is an economically independent one necessarily strong. The money factor must be made subordinate to other more important considerations. Economic self-reliance, though important, is *not primary!*

Above all we must no longer weakly wait for the Chinese Church to become spiritually vital if and when these impossible economic considerations are met. We must find out *now* how Chinese and western Christians can use available Christian economic resources so that both will thereby become spiritually more vital, and, as a result, Christianity in China more effective.

There are what might be called *four laws* (all ethical!) for the future guidance of the use in Christian work in China of western economic resources and in connection with which the indispensable conditions of Chinese Christian spiritual vitality—autonomy, responsibility and comprehension—may be given adequate scope. They are not altogether new; but they need to be given a new emphasis and put in the *first place*.

First, there is the law of *sharing*. Western Christians are under obligation to share all they have wherever there is a need. Chinese Christians are under obligation to enter into this fellowship of sharing if and when they have a need or an opportunity that can be better met that way than any other. A common purpose means a common purse. Christians nowhere are under the obligation to do Christian work in ineffective ways simply to uphold the impractical ideal—that economic self-reliance is always essential to spiritual vitality. The practical ideal is that every Chinese Christian group should do its *full share* in supporting its work, which would and should sometimes mean economic self-reliance but would often involve a measure of dependence—or better, *interdependence*. To release the economic ability of any particular Christian group in China is one of the challenges of the hour. Chinese Christians, however, are not justified in doing their work poorly just because their poverty prevents them from doing it otherwise: neither are western Christians justified in letting such work suffer in order to be loyal to an impractical idealism. All Christians are obligated to share, either by giving or using what they own, because the economic strength of all is—or should be!—at the service of all. The world-wide Christian Church, like the individual Christian, is under obligation to use all its economic and spiritual strength to meet the economic needs of Christian service no matter where the needs may be located. For a long and indefinite time such needs will exist in China. This law of sharing calls, therefore, for the *internationalization* of all the resources of the Christian Church.

Second, there is the law of *interdependence*. Neither Chinese nor western churches can fulfil their mission without the aid of the other. To make Christ known to men they must act interdependently. Such interdependence is the logical basis of Unity whether realized in an organic relationship or a free fellowship. In age, length of Christian experience and in economic strength western Christians differ from their Chinese comrades. That experience and strength can, however, be made to tell in China only through the aid of Chinese Christians. Chinese Christians need, also, to utilize this older experience and greater strength. Both are together dependent on the strength and guidance of God. Autonomy and trusteeship have their place. But both must be fitted into the law of interdependence! Neither can get along without the other and all that both have. Neither must lord it over the other. They must cooperate with each other and God. That is the law of their interdependence.

Third, there is the law of *spiritual equality*. This arises inevitably in the other two laws. In the past, western Christians have over-emphasised the value of sharing their resources with the Chinese as necessary to their own spiritual vitality. Now they must place equal

emphasis on the building up of the spiritual vitality of the Chinese and all other Christians. All must aim at an international Christian spiritual vitality!

What western Christians give of their experience and strength to the Chinese Church must be in ways that will build up its spiritual life. To find these ways is another challenge of the hour. They must share with the Chinese Church in ways that will insure *first of all* the spiritual vitality of that Church. The first step is to recognize Chinese Christians as spiritual equals. I repeat, that spiritual equality is not dependent either on economic strength or age of experience. It is dependent on a *shared experience* of fellowship and cooperation with God.

How, then, might the resources of western Christians be shared with Chinese Christians so that spiritual equality is recognized?

First, the direct responsibility of Chinese Christians to God must have *full* play. They *must* be set free from the cage of western control. In general, missionaries are ready to allow Chinese Christians to control their institutional and religious values. Why not let them have control of the lesser—the economic values—also? Second, all that is shared with them must be so shared as to help them help themselves. It must nurture their self-help. The necessity of this self-help need not be minimized because they share the help of others. *Self-help and other-help must both be made subject to Chinese Christian responsibility.* Every western Christian gift to China should be viewed in the light of this question: "Will it help the Chinese Church help itself?" Such a question is vital to a practical idealism!

Fourth, there is the law of *common trusteeship.* Trusteeship for the Great Commission did for a time of necessity rest on western Christians. That time has passed. The responsibility has not always been wisely met: it inevitably involved mistakes. Now, trusteeship for the resources of Christians everywhere rests upon the whole body of Christians, including the Chinese Church. That change calls for re-adjustment of attitude and method, particularly on the part of western Christians. The authority for the use of these resources no longer rests on any one section of the Christian Church. Christians everywhere face common tasks. For this a common trusteeship is essential. To recognize this common trusteeship is to apply the law of spiritual equality. A world-wide corporate sense of Christian trusteeship must take the place of both the denominational and the national, which have dominated the use of Christian resources heretofore. To develop this is not easy. But it is another of the challenges of the hour that must be faced nevertheless.

These, then, are the four laws that must govern the future use of Christian resources in China. Can they be applied? I think so. Three conditions are in the last analysis indispensable, as we have seen, to

the growth of spiritual vitality. In the midst of their interdependent relationship, Chinese Christians must have *autonomy:* with their autonomy must go self-responsibility: to this must be added comprehension of *their* task. These are the three aspects of a church's life that make it "indigenous" in the true sense of the word: for the real test of indigenous vitality is in these spiritual factors, not in economic strength or effort alone.

For all practical purposes, the Chinese Church now has autonomy in church and school. The transfer of responsibility is a fact, though it still faces the danger, in many cases, of being nominal rather than actual. This autonomy must include economic as well as institutional and ecclesiastical values. The Chinese Christian task, then, is to fit their autonomy into their interdependence. But who is ultimately to express this autonomy and exercise the control or self-direction involved? The answer to this question involves a fundamental aspect of the devolution now taking place. Already the first step in this devolution is apparent—the passing of control and direction of Christian work and institutions from missionary to Chinese Christian hands. In many cases, however, this control or direction is passing into the hands of organizations on which paid Christian workers have the main and sometimes the only say. That is, however, only the second step in devolution. There is a third step more important than either of these two. This autonomy and control must pass mainly into the hands of the Chinese Christian laity. The urgent necessity of this is becoming more evident every year. This third step presents more difficulties than the other two. It involves a long and arduous process of education. But the Chinese Church will not rise to its full capacity in self-help until the laity understand their opportunities and responsibilities in connection therewith and take their proper place as the main directing influence in releasing such economic resources as may be available. The development of the Chinese Christian laity to the point where its voice is *heard* in national Christian gatherings and in all church courts is another necessity of the present situation. This third step in devolution is intimately linked up with the problem of leading the Chinese Church to share its economic sinews in Christian effort.

Neither Chinese Christians nor missionaries as yet see all the implications in the above-mentioned three essential conditions to spiritual vitality. Two do, however, stand out. First, in order to determine how they want to use such resources as are available, the Chinese Christians must work out their own projects and programs: right here is where the laity comes in. To do this would give their initiative free scope. Such self-evolved projects and programs will satisfy the claims of both their autonomy and responsibility. When prepared, they may be presented to their western brethren for support or not, as they may

be led. In other words, the Chinese Church should assume the responsibility of "*raising*" its own funds whether these come in whole or in part from China or the West. One can only hope that when they do thus "raise" their own funds, they will sometimes ask for less than has often been given: for some projects, however, they may ask for more. To learn how to "raise" funds so as to build up their spiritual vitality is a lesson they urgently need. To learn it will take time. But they *must* learn it!

Having assumed the responsibility for their programs, and the "raising" and use of the funds needed therefor, they should assume that also for saying who shall serve them as preacher or whatnot. Putting the missionary under the control of Chinese Christian bodies will not, it is true, eliminate all his economic significance but it will modify it by reducing his special privileges and merge his purse-power into that of the particular organization under which he works. Furthermore, this relationship, through and by which he will participate in any aspect of Christian work in which the Chinese Church needs him, will enable the missionary to develop that intimacy of understanding which is essential to fellowship and which is in turn the keynote to his future usefulness. All this will feed the self-reliance—spiritual, economic and program-making—of the Chinese Christians. By thus unifying the direction and responsibility for Christian work in China we shall eliminate the dual control, which has certainly inhibited the development of both autonomy and the sense of responsibility, and also redirect the influence of the still necessary dual support.

Such a centralization of responsibility in the Chinese Christians should also develop a proper sense of proprietorship. Of what, after all, do we want the Chinese Church to feel itself proprietor? Economic values only? Or a spiritual enterprise? It is possible for them to feel themselves proprietors of the Christian enterprise in their own country even if they raise some of its support elsewhere. Perhaps after all, in emphasizing self-control more than self-support the Chinese Christians have sensed the right thing to do even though they have not always analyzed the situation clearly. In any event, self-control and self-responsibility can go with the shared use of Chinese and western economic resources. In this way both Chinese and western Christians can satisfy their sense of trusteeship. All this means, of course, that the Chinese Church must determine the *use* of western personnel and money in China. Only thus can they learn in the school of responsibility.

To find, then, how to work the four laws of the interdependent life four questions should be asked of every Chinese Church. (1) What do you feel *you* ought to do? (2) What can *you put* into it? (3) What do you want from western Christians to *help you* do it? (4) Whom

do you want to serve you? These four questions, indeed, are the approach to the reconstruction of Christian interdependent effort in China.

Some want to know how much money and how many workers the Chinese Church wants. Who can tell now? A final answer to such questions must wait. One board announced to its constituency, "Of course the necessary expenditures in China will be lessened as the Christian Church of China becomes self-directed and self-supported." But will they? Who knows? Why should western churches, yearly growing richer, worry about that anyhow? The chief problem is not a quantitative one. What we want is to have these laws of spiritual interdependence applied and these questions answered in a way that will free the soul of the Chinese Church. They may want less or more money than formerly. Why worry? Let western Christians wait patiently while Chinese Christians commune with God about what they should do and what they need to do it.

Western churches must see the task of the Chinese Church through the eyes of Chinese Christians. The patience of God is needed by those who would thus see through the eyes of Chinese Christians their interdependent task. But just such a vicarious vision is necessary if we would work the laws of spiritual interdependence.

I have said that while in the past there were apparent a purpose or purposes to direct the economic cooperation of western churches with China, the great difficulty in the present situation is that it lacks a generally recognized guiding purpose. In bringing this brief treatment of the problem to a close it may be asked "Has such a purpose become apparent now?" I think it has. The four laws of spiritual and economic interdependence given above, the three values to be conserved thereby and the practical ways of applying these laws are all included in one general principle, that of developing the *spiritual autonomy* of the Chinese Church. It is for this value the Chinese Christians were seeking when they urged self-control as being the prime requisite and gave to economic self-reliance a subordinate place. To lay on Chinese Christians the responsibility for "raising" and disbursing funds for Christian work, whether they use money raised in China or abroad, is to begin to apply this principle. Strictly speaking during the last era of missionary effort Chinese Christians were not asked whether or not they wanted western money. It came to them as the fruit of the generous urge of western Christians. Now they must be asked if they want it and how they will use it.

It is quite possible that many churches and groups will want to be entirely self-reliant and will want to fix their standards and activities accordingly. But it is also evident that many churches and most institutions in China will need financial help for a long time. Both

tendencies can be fitted into the principle of spiritual autonomy. To understand its implications is, therefore, one immediate need of both the Chinese Church and its western colleagues: such understanding is the basis of that comprehension of their common task at present needed by both.

These four laws of spiritual relationship and these practical methods of working them, all of which head up in the purpose to realize the spiritual autonomy of the Chinese Church, cannot be worked without the application of the same adventurous spirit to economic relations and problems on the part of western Christians that Chinese Christians are constantly urged to show with regard to life and faith. Western Christians have, as a matter of fact, shown a far less adventurous attitude with regard to the use of their economic resources in China than in the case of either their lives or their faith. They have held on to the purse-strings much more tightly than onto their lives! They need to trust the Chinese Church and God—not themselves!—to discover how western economic resources can be so used in China as to build up spiritual autonomy and vitality.

Of course the Chinese Church will fall into errors of judgement. But why, I repeat, should western churches have a monopoly of this privilege? As God has trusted western Christians so he is now calling on them to trust the Chinese Christians. Trusteeship is not an easy lesson to learn. It is never learned, however, until one is *trusted!* The Chinese Church can *independently use* gift-funds! Western churches need to learn anew how to trust God and need also to learn the new lesson of trusting the Chinese Church. That is after all the crux of the whole problem! As we learn that lesson we shall make our idealism practical.

But how can the western Christian have confidence in the Chinese administrators of the economic resources he shares with China? That is a practical question. Heretofore this confidence has been centered in the boards and the missionaries. It was rooted in the personal knowledge the contributor had of the distributor. How may this confidence be retained if administrative economic responsibility is to pass from the board and the missionary to the Chinese Church and the Chinese Christian leader and laity? The only way to insure its continuance is by having the western sharer enter into as close or intimate an understanding of and acquaintance with the Chinese Church and Chinese Christians as he formerly had with his board or missionaries. This calls for two things. First, the direct education of western Christians in knowledge of the new conditions, already apparent in the Chinese Church, and of its new programs so fast as they develop. Second, the presentation to western Christians of the calls for economic help, as developed by that Church, by Chinese representatives of both the work

to be helped and the people who bear the primary responsibility for the administration of the funds shared in its support. Only by such methods can western Christians set up that intimate acquaintance with the desires of the Chinese Church and the capacities of Chinese Christian leaders which must ever be the basis of their mutual confidence. Already some groups are moving in this direction. But the idea must needs be adopted as a general policy.

The four laws outlined with specific reference to economic relationships have, however, a deeper significance even than that. They are essentials to the building up of that wider fellowship in experience of God and cooperation with Him in service to men which provide the only soil in which further and more vital discoveries can be made in the Christian's special offering to the world—the meaning and spiritual worth of Christ. To share all they have, to share responsibility for its use in a common task with all other Christians is the only way the Christian Church everywhere can open the sluices through which may flow freely the spiritual forces which build up spiritual vitality anywhere and everywhere. Let us, therefore, talk less about self-payment and more about the *sharing of experience, tasks and economic strength.* Let us remember, too, that in order to maintain this international fellowship the Chinese Church will always need missionaries to some degree.

In conclusion I may refer again to the two major theses with which I started, doing so, however, in different words. So long as there is a difference in the height of the economic levels on which western and Chinese Christians live, the economic resources of the higher level must of necessity flow down to the lower one. This flow results from a law which is at one and the same time social and spiritual. This flow of economic resources is like an irrigation system. The source of the water in an irrigating system never determines its distribution. This those who use it must determine so as to prevent its waste, both by preventing it flowing where it can do no good or flowing so freely as to become a deluge. The major source of this economic irrigation of Christian effort in China is at present in the West: its distributor must be the Chinese Church. We need not worry about the time when China's economic level, having risen to the height of that in the West, will naturally check or divert the flowing of this stream of economic resources. In the meantime the flow must be so directed that it will nurture the spiritual life of the Chinese Church. Its rate or volume of flow at any particular place must be decided by that Church. To find out, therefore, how the Chinese Church wishes this flow to be regulated is, I repeat, the task of the moment.

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